

IBS4390 Master thesis in Ibsen Studies

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**Performance and Modernity –
Analysis of When We Dead Awaken**

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1. Introduction

Henrik Ibsen's dramatic works are automatically prone to performance analyses – one can analyze the techniques and performative methods that the works themselves imply. One can also analyze the separate performances of Ibsen's works during the years. However, what I will investigate and try to uncover in this analyses is *Ibsen's awareness of life as performance* and its connection to modern times, to be more precise, to the characteristic modern self-reflexivity. I believe that this is a very important, and one of the strongest points of his work that connects him to modernism and the post-modern audience of today. It is a universal quality that elevates his work away from the aesthetic and historic period it was written in.

The field of performance studies covers many concepts and areas, to the point that it had become a “contested” concept because it is used for representing different, sometimes colliding purposes and meanings. (Carlson 2004 : 1) It is a new development, a contemporary counterpart of the old academic text-oriented methodologies. Richard Schechner calls this study approach the ‘broad spectrum approach’ of performance studies. It is a method of study that allows application of performance research in practically all strata of culture, not only in the studies of performance art or live art. This broad spectrum approach deals with studying all types of performative behavior, as well as the ways performance and performative behavior

is used in politics, medicine, religion, popular entertainment and ordinary face-to-face interaction. ...Performative thinking must be seen as a means for cultural analyses. Performance studies courses should be taught outside performing arts departments as part of core curricula. (Schechner 2004: 8)

Schechner sees performance studies as the new paradigm that needs to replace theatre studies completely, while other theorists, like Philip Auslander respond with the milder approach that instead of a replacement, what is at stake is an ‘articulation’ of a paradigm. Following Thomas Kuhns concepts and terminology on scientific evolution, Auslander shows that

[t]he evolution of Performance studies [derives] out of Theatre Studies, Speech Communication and Anthropology... [and that what is at stake is] the application and extension of a paradigm to new areas of research.” (Auslander 1997 : 3)

At the same time, discourse used in performance studies is more and more used in literary studies, while discourse used for studying texts is more and more employed while studying performance.

Literary engagements with performativity tend to focus on the performative function of language as represented in literary texts, and much performance-oriented criticism of drama, for all its invocation of the theatre similarly betrays a desire to locate the meanings of the stage in the contours of the dramatic text. Performance studies has developed a vivid account of non-dramatic, nontheatrical, nonscripted, ceremonial, and everyday-life performances, performances that appear to part from the authority of the texts. Both disciplines view drama as a species of performance driven by texts; as a result, drama appears to be an increasingly residual mode of performance. (Worthen 2003 : 86-87)

According to Worthen, these approaches lead to discussions of drama as lead by the text, as a left-over, remnant type of performance. Performance studies have been successful in analyzing dramatic texts that contain performative aspects. These performative aspects originate in the performance-like aspects of culture, society and behaviour, such as Judith Butler's studies of performativity of gender, Victor Turner's studies of culture as performance or Austin's studies of the performative functions of language. These approaches also relate to contemporary stages of plays written in the past, but performed in the style of the new 'performance art,' and have been especially successful in analyzing Shakespeare, Chekhov, Beckett and Moliere, even some classical Greek dramatists, for example. (Worthen 2003 : 87) The re-staging of plays very often means deconstructing the relations of the age the original work was written in (gender, political, religious, social, economic and power relations), thus functioning as criticism. The re-staging can also mean introducing modern issues, problems, technology or staging techniques in the new staging of the old texts, thus making them postmodern collages, intertexts and signs that span way beyond the original meaning of the texts. Sometimes the original meanings of texts can be neglected completely.

In 2006, The National Theatre in Oslo staged a performance of *When We Dead Awaken* in the 'performance art' style, with the emphasis put on the triangular relationship between Rubek, Irene and Maja, and the problem of the aging artist (or the aging man) put up front. One of the main characters – Ulheim was completely absent in this performance. The title of the new staging was *Når vi døde... gjenbruk av Henrik Ibsens Når vi døde vågner*, thus clarifying that what is being staged is a re-usage, a re-reading and a new text. This changed many of the aspects of the original text of the play, but allowed emphasis on topics that the director wanted to stress

significantly – relations between people, age and death. The new staging also completely changed Ibsen's realistic presentation by making performance art of his disputably modernist play and by introducing the metaphor of dance as a metaphor for relations among people.

As a short commentary on the new staging the following text was offered:

de danser...

de danser livets dans. De virvler rundt og merker ikke alle tær
de trækker på, alle partnere de byr opp og bytter ut, de merker
ikke hvor mye de svinger seg rundt seg selv og hverandre i
narsissistisk takt.

de danser...

I NÅR VI DØDE konfronteres tre mennesker, han og hun og hun
med sine skavanker, sine håp, sin tro og sine lyster. De lengter
etter å leve livet til bunns som frie individer, men snører samtidig
ufrihetens ned tettere rindt seg. De narrer andre, men egentlig
bedrar de seg delv. Og alltid liger døden og venter.

men, de danser...

(from the program for the performance, 2006)

The director of the performance offered this text to the audience as a verbal explanation of the performance, as a sublimation of the issues that were emphasized. This short text is stressing the corporeal, bodily aspect of the performance. However, instead of through the performance itself, this dance is textually 'pre-performed' for the spectators, so that the illusion of seeing a classically staged play by Ibsen was lost even before the performance actually started. The actors in the performance were not really dancing, they were interacting verbally and moving between the open stage and the audience. Thus, the dance mentioned here is a verbal lead to a dance (dance is always performative) that was not performed on stage. This mentioned, but absent on the stage dance is a metaphor of life as dance, of life as corporeal interaction that stops when the body stops to live. Ironically, as Worthen showed previously, the analyses of this understanding of life as a corporeal interactive performance, the pointing to it, is done verbally, and by no one else but by people that work in theatre. The connection between performance studies and textual analyses, the connection between performance and text is undeniable and unbreakable – after all, texts are what we inherit as guides for performances.

Jon McKenzie went even further in the broadening of Schechner's broad spectrum approach and understands performance studies as "an emergent stratum of power and knowledge." (McKenzie 2001 : 18) For McKenzie, there are three general types of performances that shape humanity and the world (especially USA) as it is today: *organizational performance* (that has slowly overtaken the public office life and the companies by introducing the performance management strategy), *cultural performance* (that is the focus of interest of this thesis and embodies study of all manifestations of performance or performative behavior in a culture), and *technological performance* (that originates in the Cold War's technological frenzy, but is more than obvious today in a world where we are totally dependent on bar codes and machines of all sorts.) Based on the performative theories of Butler, the attitudes towards the postmodern of Lyotard, the analyses of Marx and Freud by Marcuse (mainly in *Eros and Civilisation*), as well as the analyses and theoretical presumptions of Foucault, Deleuze and Gattari (as well as of many others), he comes to the conclusion and the prophecy that "*performance will be to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries what discipline was to the eighteenth and nineteenth, that is, an onto-historical formation of power and knowledge.*" (McKenzie 2001 : 18)

For McKenzie, performance has been the most influential paradigm, the principle for the forming of the US society in the last century. He distinguishes between larger units of performances and smaller units of cultural performatives. The performatives create larger performances that serve as building material for the largest 'layer,' or performance stratum.

Starting with the most abstract level, performance is a stratum of power and knowledge that emerges in the United States after the Second World War. Its emergence can be traced, in part, through at least three research paradigms which rest atop it: Performance Management (organizational performance), Performance Studies (cultural performance), and Techno-Performance (technological performance). At the most concrete level, the power of performance can be analyzed in terms of blocks of discursive performatives and embodied performances, audio and visual knowledge forms bound together by normative forces and unbound by mutational ones. These blocks make the paradigms, yet their composition resonates with that of the stratum itself. (McKenzie 2001 : 19-20)

McKenzie's understanding of performance is so wide that it attempts to explain the principle of functioning and surviving of the individual in postmodern society, condensed in the threatening message: *Perform or Else!* This message he borrowed from the cover page of *Forbes Magazine*, published in January 1994, together with the "Annual Report on American Industry." (McKenzie 2001 : 4) He paraphrases this

message to “Perform – or else: You are fired!,” showing how deep the essence of performance had penetrated the life of the individual, how performance has become a necessity for existence.

According to *The Routledge Companion of Theatre and Performance*, performance studies have mainly approached performance and performativity through five usual and relevant meanings:

1. the meaning of *an act of*, a *live event* before an audience. This act that is presented before an audience has (usually) been thought of, prepared and rehearsed prior to the event. The event itself can be a theatre performance, a show, dance, music, a happening, a live performance, a street performance. It is characterized by the quality of *liveness* (meaning that what is happening is here and now), and it produces a sense of presence with the audience.

2. performance is used to signify *all types of social behaviour*, including everyday behaviour. Society and everyday life are overflowing with performative functions, although some of them seem ‘natural’. Some of these arbitrary roles are so habitual that (most of the time) they are considered to be inborn. J. Butler for example, perceives identity and identity formation as a consequence of the performative functions in society, i.e., as a consequence of the effect of social life on the psyche. Even such a ‘natural’ category as gender is, relies on and is consisted of performance of very specific social and behavioural conventions. (Butler 1999)

3. performance can denote *success and achievement*, as in sexual performance, performance in sports, performance of machines. This meaning owes its existence to the shift of values that have been forced by the capitalist paradigm. A lot of the controlling structures of today’s society are based on fear of not performing correct or well enough.

4. performance is also a synonym to *performance (live) art and body art*, contemporary forms that most of the time are deconstructing firm and established ideas on identity and other aesthetic, cultural and social constructs. Sometimes they can be emphasizing these same identities in order to make political claims.

5. the term performance is also used in the meaning of *performance as deconstructive performance*, “working to challenge naturalistic characterization and narration in order to question the apparent truths ‘shown’ by representational forms.” (Allain and Harvie 2006 : 182) Postmodern performance uses “deconstructive and metatheatrical performance strategies that foreground process over product,

interrogate theatrical illusionism and resist offering stable, conclusive meanings”. (Allain and Harvie 2006 : 182)

My interest in performance studies falls mostly on the second meaning, i.e. on the understanding of performance as social behaviour, (or of social behaviour as performance,) as well as on the problems that arise with the success or failure of such a social (public) performance. We are constantly performing in our everyday lives, by dressing up and adorning our bodies, with our speech, our actions and our behaviour. We follow strict rules of performance in order to fit in social relationships. Lefebvre, a French sociologist, held the opinion that deliberate performative actions can enhance and enrich people's everyday lives. In his opinion, “[e]veryday life should be a work of art.” (Allain and Harvey 2006 : 150) Deliberate, conscious performative actions make one's life a work of art, and this thought has led to the development of live art and body art. However, this doesn't mean that one is making an artefact out of one's life – it just means that the consciousness about our behaviour can relief life from the imprisonment of routine performances and give more creative and expressional freedom to the individual when approached playfully and artistically. Usual and common interactions of people are conscious or unconscious performances. These performances are crucial for obtaining necessary information for establishing attitudes and expectations towards other people. They refer to our need to know and understand the other, but also to the need to be understood; to our horizons of expectations and desires from other people, but also to their desires and expectations from us.

As Jon McKenzie points out, performance is a strong paradigm of the twentieth and the twenty-first century, especially for the American society. I believe that the beginning of the formation of what McKenzie calls performative stratum began earlier, in the high modern times (the second half of 19th century), together with the rapid industrialization, the sharpening of the public-private dichotomy, the forming of the nations and the capitalist societies. The countries that had the largest part of their population immigrating to the US in the 19th century were Ireland and Norway, and they actively formed the industrial power of the states. According to the on-line resource of the public encyclopaedia Wikipedia (2007), Norway had one third of its population (around 800 000 people) immigrate to the States between 1825 and 1925. These immigrants brought their cultural and religious ways to the already

culturally mixed States, and the new mixed culture of the new continent also influenced the old continent in return. Ibsen deals with this topic in his first social play, *The Pillars of Society*, in which the new-spirited, modern-thinking immigrants return to their Norwegian social background and create a stir that ends in an insincere and staged public appearance, in a public performance similar to an election campaign.

Authors such as Marcuse and Lyotard observed the consequences of these global changes of late modernity. They theorized them and invented postmodernity as a sign that those modern times are over. And after that Jon McKenzie built his theory of the performance stratum in the late postmodern times, explaining the further consequences. Authors such as Butler, Deleuze, Gatari and Foucault based their works on analyses and re-readings of Freud who himself modelled his theories on the analyses of the pathological symptoms of modernity. Therefore I believe that the initial awareness, the first signs of reaction towards performatives and performances in life lies in late modern Europe, i.e. in the 19th century. Besides being the age of late modernity, this is also the age when modernism as an aesthetic development started to appear in Europe.

In the field of theatre, it was modernism that brought the first shifts that opened and changed classical theatrical art towards performance art. These changes were made by rejecting realism. The modernist's rejection of a performance of reality later turned into a postmodernist's real/live performance. However, these processes are not in the focus of this thesis. What is in the interest of this thesis is the investigation of Ibsen's contribution to modernity's and modernism's arising awareness of the performative qualities of (modern) life.

Henrik Ibsen's dramatic works are a consequence of the changes observed in the period of industrial modernity, simply because they are set in the background of this historical sequence and they are investigating life and relations in this age. They can also serve as a model for investigating the rise of modern drama, since Ibsen was one of the first to abandon the romanticist and melodramatic conventions of playwriting and introduced reality-based and actual settings that connected to the modern times and their tastes and preferences. Henrik Ibsen's works are one of the pioneer artworks that announced modernism as an aesthetic development, parallel to the development of industrial modernity. In the dramatic arts they might even be considered as the first.

An important topic for the Ibsen scholars is the placement of Ibsen's work in the crossing point of the historical age of late modernity and the aesthetic canon of modernism, a topic that culminated with Toril Moi's book on Ibsen's modernism in 2006. When searching the Ibsen bibliography of The Center for Ibsen Studies in Oslo, there are 31 results on the topic of modernism. Two of them date to 1966, three of them in the 80's, and all the rest have been written in the 1990's and forth, most of them in the late 90's. On the topic of modernity there are 40 analyses. Two of them were written in the 80's, two in the 70's, and all the rest from the 90's on. It seems that Ibsen's modernism is of an almost exclusively late-postmodern(ist) interest. To the contemporary Ibsen scholars, the question of the term modernity naturally imposes a need for investigation and definition, since they are outside of it and can observe these historical and contextual occurrences from a necessary critical distance. The recent interests in Ibsen's modernism as well as the efforts to find and place his wider significance in the age of modernity are a natural consequence of our contemporaries' distance to his work and these concepts. As I previously suggested, I find modernity and modernism as crucial for the understanding of the importance of performance and performativity for our contemporary world, and I believe that the clarification of the placement and the position of Ibsen's works in these categories can bring fresh and enlightening views on his connection to the overall contemporary awareness and significance of performativity and performance.

Therefore, with hope that the following analysis will contribute to this necessary investigation, I will analyze some of the problems and changes that came with the age of historical modernity. This is necessary in order to examine how these changes influenced Henrik Ibsen's life and works, as well as to understand why he seems so contemporary and modern even today, to the postmodern audience. There is a strong and obvious connection between the age of late, or industrial modernity and the forming of the aesthetic category of modernism. Ibsen's works are an example of how this connection gradually developed, since they are inspired by the perceived changes in the understanding of the human, the individual and the self in this age, and they reflect these changes.

Henrik Ibsen's works are also a reflection of the changes in the public-private relations that came as a natural consequence of the modern capitalism and the rapid industrial development in 19th century. Along with the heightened awareness of the difference between public and private behaviour, Ibsen's dramas offer an awareness

of the various roles and performatives the modern society demands from each individual. They are investigating the first consequences from this condition. The very existence of modern society depends on successful performing and continuation of these roles. Some of these roles are strictly in connection to public behaviour, related to social roles, professions, gatherings and events from the public life, but some of these prescribed roles and performatives, in fact, the ones that create the most problems for the modern individual, are the ones that touch the most private side of one's life, the realm of the family, of emotions, ideals and love. Heightened self-reflexivity and a loss of, or confusion about personal ideal are also features of the modern human, as a result of the new relations between the private and the public world.

The topics of the problematic bourgeois' individuality, the problem of social, professional and family ideals, artistic self-reflexivity, as well as attention to expression and representation through language are characteristic of Ibsen's works. His last play, *When We Dead Awaken*, serves as a summary and a condensed message of his whole dramatic work, and this is the play that is closest to the modernist aesthetics' requirements. Therefore, the focus of my analyses will be concentrated on this play. I believe that this play holds a key for the understanding of the complex and layered issues Ibsen is opening up and discussing through his works. I will concentrate only on some aspects of these issues, namely on the aspects revolving around the personal (or private) ideal, as well as the ideal imposed by the public as one's vocation (specifically the artistic vocation) and the performing, or exercising these ideals in the everyday. I will also investigate the ideal of the family as an environment in which the hidden private should be able to relax and be protected from the overtly exposing public, i.e., an environment that should serve as a "decompression chamber" of the public pressures on the private psyche.

All these ideals weigh on and shape the modern individual, and they are opening a discussion on the possibility\impossibility of happiness and fulfilment within modern society. My hope is that these analyses will eventually lead to the uncovering of the wise suggestion that is radiating from Ibsen's works: the subtle apprehension that social, professional, religious or aesthetic ideals can be overwhelming and destructive for the self and the private life if one takes them too seriously as the single and absolute model for one's live-performance.

At the same time, *When We Dead Awaken* also sublimates issues and topics that are of big importance for the awareness of the performatives and performances in life. The social, professional, aesthetic or religious ideals are nothing else but idealized roles that need to be played out in public, and their overwhelming destructiveness for the private is nothing else but a lack of awareness for them as (only) public roles. I believe that what Ibsen is showing us in his plays points to an awareness for the performatives of life as (only) performatives and for the performances in life as (only) performances – and this is the same awareness that became intellectualized and public in post-war USA and that led to the forming of the performance paradigm and the performance stratum. The performance paradigm and the performance stratum are not an exclusively American condition however, and today performance is studied in many European centres as well, most notably in Great Britain. My presumption is that the earliest beginnings of the formation of what McKenzie calls the performance stratum can be found in the age of industrial modernity, i.e., the late 19th century Europe and the States. And they also can be traced in Ibsen's works.

2. Modern, Modernity and Modernism

The Danish critic Georg Brandes, who was Ibsen's contemporary, labelled him as "one of the modern minds that made the modern breakthrough." (McFarlane and Bradbury 1976 : 43) The 19th century writers and thinkers were not aware of modernity or modernism as we perceive it, simply because they were the anticipators, or rather, the initiators, of what will later become the complex modernist constellation of aesthetic movements in the first half of the 20th century. The first use of the term modern has been noticed in the 5th century, in order to signify the new coming times of Christianity as opposite the former Roman pagan times. (Habermas 1983 : 3) Christopher L.C.E. Witcombe (2000) shows how art critics referred to their contemporary artists as 'modern' ever since the 15th century, giving the example of Cennino Cennini who was referring to Giotto as modern in 1437, as well as Giorgio Vasari who "writing in 16th-century Italy refers to the art of his own period as

‘modern.’” Witcombe posits ‘modern’ as an art historical term that is generally and roughly used to signify the artistic creation (in style and ideology) in the period from 1860 to the 1970’s. He clarifies that the “term ‘modernism’ is also used to refer to the art of the modern period. More specifically, ‘modernism’ can be thought of as referring to the philosophy of modern art.” (Witcombe: 2000)

James McFarlane gives biographical facts about Ibsen’s awareness of the coming new times, of “the new era,” and of his own role in its forming:

It has been said that I too, in our countries, have taken a lead in contributing to the creation of the new era. I believe, (...), that the age in which we live might just as well be described as an ending, and that from it something new is on the point of being born. Indeed I believe that the doctrine of evolution and as it is in the natural sciences is valid in the cultural aspects of life. I believe that the time is immanent when the concept of politics and the concept of society will cease to exist in their present forms, (...), poetry philosophy and religion will merge into a new category, a new vital force, of which we who are living today have no understanding. (Ibsen in McFarlane 1979 : 157)

In fact, Ibsen and Brandes were supporting each other on this creation of the new era, believing in one another to be one of the first ones to act in the world towards it becoming reality. In order to do this, Ibsen advised Brandes that one has to

Subvert the concept of statehood; make free choice and spiritual kinship the sole essentials for union and you have a start of a liberty that is worth something. (...) Yes, dear friend, all that matters is not to be frightened by the venerableness of the institution (...) What is there, fundamentally, that we are obliged to hold fast to? Who can guarantee me that 2 and 2 don’t make five on Jupiter? (Ibsen in McFarlane 1979 : 164)

As a pioneer of the modern industrialized new era Ibsen shows remarkable awareness for the role he was playing in its forming. His words cited above show a remarkable idealism and they are written in a prophetic style, a hope in the new times that were supposed to change humanity in its core. However, what McFarlane also points to is that in fact, Ibsen was supporting, motivating, and pushing Brandes towards acting in the battle for the new era more than he was acting publicly on it himself. According to McFarlane, Ibsen didn’t feel enthusiastic about joining parties, public projects, speeches, “any kind of oratorical posturing” and he even wrote to Brandes that having friends prevents from spiritual development. Ibsen insisted on aloneness and isolation for the purpose of spiritual development because contact with others implies having to oblige to courtesy and politeness that prevent one from being one’s self. (McFarlane : 168) Ibsen was avoiding being a public figure and conforming to the performative standards of a public person, but he couldn’t avoid being modern,

(simply because the public liked him) and he couldn't escape the modern(ist) thinking.

The two most common understandings of modernity are differing in their attitude to time: one possible understanding of modernity is as a form of life, meaning that to be modern at all times is a prerequisite for being contemporary, fashionable, current, in a here-and-now space, and the other common understanding of modernity is as a period in history that encompasses the historical time and all the events since the renaissance. (Jervis 1998 : Introduction) Modernity was unwrapping and developing differently in different parts of Europe, as well as in the States. As a sublimation of these two ways of understanding modernity, John Jervis suggests that modernity is:

the experience of the world as constantly changing, constantly engendering a past out of the death of here and now, and constantly reproducing that here and now as the present, the contemporary, the fashionable. ...the past is inert and the future is unreal: what is real is the momentary experience of the 'now', as it moves from an unrealized future into a lifeless, shadowy past. The 'eternal in the transient' is perhaps the eternal, recurrence of the transient itself. (Jervis 1998 : 6)

This notion of the world as constantly changing could have developed only with the abandoning of the Middle Age concept of the world as a pre-determinate order where everything is fixed and fatalistically unchangeable, as well as with the development of the sciences and the discoveries of the new worlds. This definition of modernity is rooted in the present, in the moment, in constant adaptation and change. These adaptation and changes are especially short-lived, various and many in the modern period. To remain modern, a person is required to always be ready to perform right, to stage and shift the self. To choose the clothes one is wearing, to pick the words one is using, even to the way one holds one's body – all this requires learning, adopting, adapting, constant changing.

The period from 1850 to 1950, most commonly referred to as late modernity, is the period when the world experienced the first rapid changes of the fast and massive industrialization, the new means of transport and production, the quick and ever faster changes of fashions, moods and styles, growth of population and cities, the development of media and public transportation (like the railways and the trams, for example, the emerging of the telegrams, etc.). This is also the period in which Henrik Ibsen appeared and became fashionable and modern. The meaning of the term modern as Georg Brandes had used it refers to the changes that were apparently

completely new at the time Ibsen was writing, compared to other writers from the same period and compared to the established tradition before Ibsen. Ibsen was also referred to as modern by German writers that were active in the same period. In fact, he was so modern in Europe, especially in Berlin, that there was an almost established 'Ibsenism'.

Ibsen, Ibsen everywhere! There's nothing like it! Over the whole globe Ibsen fever rages. The whole world is Ibsen-mad, even though unwillingly, for the entire air is full of Ibsen-germs! No salvation! Fashions and advertisements, everywhere proclaim Ibsen's name, trumpet his praise. On cigars, ladies' trinkets, pastries, bodices, ties is flaunted the world in letters of gold: Ibsen! A la Ibsen! (McFarlane 1976 : 112).

These are the words of a small rhyme (the rhyme is lost in translation) that was being recited in the streets of Berlin after the performance of his plays in the theatres. Pamphlets and various manifestos were popping out in late 19th and early 20th century Europe, proclaiming aesthetics, styles of life and behaviour, moral and ethic values, poetic guide-lines, visions and prophecies. This appraisal of Ibsen is very similar to the appraisals that the later modernists (the surrealists, the Dadaists and the futurists are the most typical examples) were writing for the purpose of spreading their own fashions. In the ending passage from the *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924) by Andre Breton, one can observe the same rhetoric that opposes art/poetics to nature. While the Ibsen lovers of the late 19th century were using the rhetoric of natural sciences and evolution as a metaphor for the growing popularity of Ibsen, the surrealists themselves were trying to chase away natural existence and take over the world with their art and poetics. They were desperate to erase reality, nature and natural sciences and change the world-view of humanity.

What is important in the emerging of such pamphlets and manifestoes is the 'prescription' for being modern, the announcing of the fashions, the description and the performing of 'style'. What can also be read from these pamphlets and manifestoes is awareness and praising of artificiality, turning to culture, neglecting nature, or using it for the purpose of emphasizing culture.

...Surrealism is the "invisible ray" which will one day enable us to win out over our opponents. "You are no longer trembling, carcass." This summer the roses are blue; the wood is of glass. The earth, draped in its verdant cloak, makes as little impression upon me as a ghost. It is living and ceasing to live which are imaginary solutions. Existence is elsewhere. (Breton 1924)

The opponents mentioned in the excerpt above are no others than the realists of the 19th century, as well as the realists' vision of the world, and Ibsen was considered to be their leading representative.

Ibsen was a canonical figure in England, overshadowing Strindberg, who remained “a secondary figure” in comparison. (Rem 2004 : 150) He influenced writers such as James Joyce and Henry James. James admired the difficulty of understanding in Ibsen's work, and implemented this in his own works. (Ewbank 2002 : 25). In 1900, as a young admirer of Ibsen's work (he was only eighteen) James Joyce wrote a review on Ibsen's *When We Dead Awaken*. He was fascinated by the freshness and actuality of the play. Shaw was also a big admirer of Ibsen and an advocate of the social, political and economic aspects of his work, writing several works related to him, *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* being perhaps the most famous one. The works of Ibsen were massively read and reproduced, and very influential on the public life of late 19th century Europe and the States. Ibsen was very contemporary modern.

In his biography of Ibsen, Robert Ferguson demonstrates how much Ibsen was modern and famous at the time he was preparing and writing his dramatic *Epilogue*, his last play which is the focus of this thesis. By the end of 19th century he had become a public figure, a star, and in his honour “even the ships at the harbour were flagged.” (Ferguson 1996 : 412) Royalty and other famous artists and culture-related public people from all over Europe were greeting him and celebrating his birthday in 1898, and he had to make public appearances and speeches. Later that same year in Copenhagen he was chased by an admiring and overwhelmed crowd that had recognized him, and in their show of admiration tattered his clothes. In order to calm them down, Ibsen was forced to make a public bow and ‘expose’ himself, similarly to a royalty or one of the big stars of the present. (Fergusson 1996 : 414) He had become a powerful public figure, and he had to continuously keep up with this role, aware of what he had become and how it impacted his private life. Ibsen had to constantly perform in public, in front of his audience.

Before he became famous, he went on a voluntary exile from his own country in Europe, abandoning his roots and his family for more than two decades, while constantly contemplating on Norway and measuring its values on the axis of the private self-family-society relation. In a letter to Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson from 9\10

December 1867 he points that he had not returned back to his birth place because of not being understood, but that this not returning is a bad way of leading a life:

Jeg har Rett till at sige Dig dette; thi jeg ved at jeg under Skorpen af Vrøvl og Svineri har været alvorlig i min Livsførelse. Ved Du at jeg har for hele Livet trukket mig bort fra mine egne Forældre, fra min hele Slægt, fordi jeg ikke kunde blive staaende i et halvt Forstaaelsesforhold? (Ibsen 1867)

Ironically, his last twelve plays are all in some extent a representation of particular aspects of the new bourgeois family and the new bourgeois home, and they are all situated in Norway. In all of the plays there is a character that is not understood or accepted by his environment. It is as if Ibsen was following a typical modernist obsession coming from the need for understanding the role of the individual in a family and in the fate and the structure of the new society. At the same time, he was also obsessively rejecting interpretations of his work and any ideological etiquette. The story of Ibsen is one of fall and rise, and his story was known to the public contemporary to him. When finally he returned to Norway, Ibsen was well-established, wealthy and popular, and he fit and performed his person in order to support this image. To be modern in this sense, in the sense of popularity, means being public. The public show of a modern person has to be staged in order to cover up the private person that becomes specifically interesting because it is the most vulnerable part of one's self.

The private life of a person needs protection not only in the cases of popularity. The need for protection of the private life is a consequence of the changes in the modern times that created a dichotomy between the private and the public. A private thing is something that doesn't belong to the outside world and that is not free for everyone to touch and see. A private space is someone's home. The private life, in this sense, is the part of life reserved for the family, the close circle of friends, it is the life outside the public obligatory work in offices and with strangers. Through his works Ibsen shows how the efforts to protect and isolate the realm of the family and the private self from the insecure outside, as well as from the past can lead to isolation of reality and a life spent in a constant "white lie" situation. This life and this lie are not satisfactory and are constantly threatened by the parallel fear of the discovery of the secrets and the real truth about a person's life.

In his early years, Ibsen and his family were victims of the economic uncertainty so typical of modern times; their history is a typical tale of decline. As a

result of this situation his father was abusing alcohol, while his mother and his sister became piously religious and introverted. His brothers went to the New World to search for their good fortune and prosperity. The person Ibsen, before he left Norway, was not performing successfully in public and in society, he was not famous, his works were not acknowledged. His family was also not performing successfully and in the eyes of the public, they were a failure. They failed to adapt to the changes that the industrial and capitalist market imposed on society in the age of modernity. In a letter to his rival Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson from 9\10 December 1867, he wrote:

Jeg har Rett till at sige Dig dette; thi jeg ved at jeg under Skorpen af Vrøvl og Svineri har været alvorlig i min Livsførelse. Ved Du at jeg har for hele Livet trukket mig bort fra mine egne Forældre, fra min hele Slægt, fordi jeg ikke kunde blive staaende i et halvt Forstaaelsesforhold? (Ibsen 1867)

Ibsen himself as a very young man conceived an illegitimate child with a much older woman from a lower class. In a manner similar to the one of avoiding his own family, he avoided seeing his son or talking about him. Mohr emphasizes that he “...was not merely an author but a creator of myths,” (Mohr 2005 : 35) referring to his untrue statement for the declaration of paternity. This ability and need for creation of myths, or appearances, personas, performatives, or performances is one of the dominant characteristics of the modern times. It is a necessity that protects and shows the abilities of the fittest. It is what Ibsen tried to avoid by not posing, but what later inescapably filled his life. The bitter experiences that the young Henrik Ibsen had in connection to the security of family life and intimacy are reflected in his social dramas, from *The Pillars of Society* to *The Wild Duck*. However, even in the more psychological – oriented ones after *Rosmersholm*, Ibsen poses the problem of the truth about social and external reality as destructive for the constructed peace and security of the family and the self. The realism of Ibsen’s modern drama lies in this representation of the impact of society on the bourgeois family, shifting the interest from the folklore-based story to a shocking depiction of reality. However, as James McFarlane points out, modernism brought the awareness of the individual and the struggle to state and implement individual truth, for the purpose of uncovering the false nature of established “truths”. (McFarlane 1976 : 80) And this is also a large part of Ibsen’s posing topics. “Ibsen er kunstneren som borger.” (Østerberg 2000 : 201)

In connection to realist drama, J.L. Styan explains how the realist dramatist of the 19th century, despite having to represent real life situations had to also portray the middleclass and their life, even when it meant writing a plot with events that do not “normally” happen in an everyday life. The real purpose of the dramatist was to bring the plots and the general interest closer to the individual, the family, the relations of the individual with society and the surrounding. (Styan 1981 : 5)

Erik Østerud sees Ibsen’s realism as transparent, as something that is merely there to get the effect of reality, as a convention that he used because of belonging to the modern times and following the current convention of realism and naturalism. He assumes a double meaning coming from Ibsen’s works, which is achieved by allowing a “*sacred drama, a drama of myth and ritual ceremonies, to be housed with another drama, a drama of modernity.*” (Østerud 1994 : 162) By introducing sacred drama that is framed by mythical, magic and religious intertexts, Ibsen was in fact responding to the insecure and changed fate of the modern human. Modernity was cutting of the connections to tradition, to established rules, concepts and determinism, and as a result of this there was an emerging need for re-confirming one’s position in the world, for a repetitive re-establishing of truths.

Modernity cultivates the utopian perspective, it wants *the new*, even *the shockingly new*, to be released from the present moment. The sacred drama on the other hand works with a different set of concepts. (...) In Ibsen’s plays these two dramas confront each other. As they have opposite conceptions of the present moment, they fight each other. The sacred drama attacks the actual flux of life from behind in an attempt to link what is to what *has been*: time should not change! The drama of modernity puts a strong and never-ending effort into freeing the present moment from the tyranny of tradition in order to change what *is* to what shall *be*: to be is to become! (Østerud 1994 : 163)

The modern realist drama was pointing to the audience the complexity of the private-public relations, the insecurities of the modern times. The space that is left for the plots and events that do not “normally” happen is exactly Ibsen’s strong and attractive side, it is the point where his realism is spiced up with issues and techniques that bring him closer to modernism. It is also the space where deep buried psychological issues and mechanisms appear on the stage. It is the space where the search for the true self begins, the place where the public life appears only as a threat, as a controlling mechanism, and where the questions fall not on the social purpose and the pragmatism of the human, but on his very essence and his true desires. It is the space where psychological reflexivity enters Ibsen’s works, as a result of the psyche’s need for security.

R. Sennett reminds that “the artfulness which is squandered in self-absorption is that of playacting; playacting requires an audience of strangers to succeed, but is meaningless or even destructive among intimates.” (Sennett 1977 : 28-29) Playacting means that a person adopts a certain role that has to be put on and acted out properly in order to be believed that it is ‘natural.’ Thus, the individual that is playing a role can be accepted as a ‘genuine’ person. This understanding of social, public life brings it very close to the structure of theatre. It also connects to Østerud’s pointing to the sacred drama as strive for re-establishing order and tradition, since, like in sacred rituals, the public roles are continuously repeated and re-evoked, and, like in rituals, they are known, recognizable, limited and conventional. And the success of their performing is dependent of the successful re-performing. However, among intimates, this kind of public performing is destructive, because the private life is expected to be the field of the spontaneous and the natural.

The idea of social life as theatre is not new, nor specifically and exclusively inherent to modernity. There are three common purposes that this idea serves: the purpose of introducing *illusion and delusion as fundamental questions of human life*; it *separates human nature from social action* (i.e. puts into light the difference between an illusion and a belief); and it creates *the images of this theatrum mundi as reflections on the art people exercise in ordinary life as actors*, as playing roles. (Sennett 1977 : 35) These roles that people should play are determined by conventions, fundamentally grounded in public life. These same conventions are the safe prescription for acting properly, the most reliable thing about public life, while at the same time they are what oppresses and restricts individuality, expression and intimacy the most. They are the real creators of the gap between the private and the public, a gap that became an obvious problem in the age of modernity and the new capitalist society. The problem of the public-private relation in the bourgeois capitalist society is a persistent topic in Ibsen’s works which won the immediate attention of the wider European and American public of the late 19th and early 20th century.

This immediate influence of the dramatic works of Ibsen was felt in most of the Western European cultural centres. In the introduction of the reader on *European and Nordic Modernisms* (2004: 12-13), Nordic modernisms, and especially Ibsen, are presented as to have responded to European modernism in an active way by contributing to the development and spread of modernist ideas. The implication of this statement is that there was an existing European modernism at the time that Ibsen

was writing. However, this was not the case. Modernism in Europe started to develop with and after the emergence of Ibsen, Strindberg, and a whole set of other writers in different genres. Nordic modernism, on the other hand, comes to its full development and growth much later, in the first half of the 20th century, after the influence of the big European literary movements, or all the –isms of the early 20th century.

According to *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, modernism in literature “reveals a breaking away from established rules, traditions and conventions, fresh ways of looking at men’s position and function in the universe and many (in some cases remarkable) experiments in form and style.” (Cudon 1999 : 516) In the same edition, Ibsen is presented as a key figure that favored realism, (732) and as the founder of naturalist drama (Cudon 1999 : 538).

However, it would be a mistake if one fails to mention that he was also breaking the rules of established naturalism and realism by introducing romanticist and modernist elements in his works, by commencing myth, folklore, and hints of the supernatural. He presented new points of view to accepted and commonly established norms of cultural, social, aesthetic, religious and moral issues, uncovering the truth about human relations grounded in power, the bourgeois ideal of the home, the family, the new capitalist society, the artistic ideal.

The recent book of Toril Moi (2006) demonstrates and explains how Ibsen’s formal techniques and innovations in playwriting, his “self-conscious metatheatrical reflections” (Moi 2006 : 2) as well as his choice of topics and problems are clear signs of modernism. She rejects the most commonly established opinion of Ibsen as only a realist, or even naturalist, and shows that there is a need for a new and fresh look at these categories. Moi opens her book with a discussion on the ambiguous position that Ibsen has within the defining limits of modernism by pointing to the curious fact that although Ibsen’s works are in the common curricula for studying modernism in the dramatic arts, he is usually not claimed to be one of the first introducers of modernism in drama. Rather, he is considered to be a rather vague and boring figure, a necessary, but not interesting link in the historical chain that leads to the birth of the many European modernisms of the first half of the 20th century. She explains this to be a result of the “specific set of aesthetic beliefs” (Moi 2006 : 2) of the post World War Period that completely rejected romanticist idealism as well as later realism and was turned solely to the poetics and aesthetics of the developed modernisms of the early twentieth century.

Historically and aesthetically, Ibsen was raised in the tradition of romanticism, and he stopped writing just before the fruitful emerging of many of the European forms of modernism. Therefore, it is natural to look at his work as the link between these two aesthetic paradigms, and to look at him as an in-between-periods writer that cannot be placed totally in one or the other concept, but can be understood as having his own unique poetics and aesthetics that encompasses elements from romanticism and announces issues of modernism while using realist techniques and settings. Therefore, I am inclined to call Ibsen's specific modernism *proto-modernism*, since it is not modernism in the purest sense of the word, nor does it fit historically into the period of the blossoming of the many modernist movements. In fact, the modernists were always denying and throwing of Ibsen as a realist, as boring, and they were establishing their set of aesthetic guides and beliefs on this basis of the rejection of realism. This attitude is what Moi labels as 'modernist ideology.' (Moi 2006 : 2)

The later modernists were more oriented towards aesthetic criteria that praised artificiality, meta-artistic and otherworldly qualities, they were experimenting radically with the formal aspects of art, as well as language, they had an increased interest in madness, pagan religions and cults, distant civilizations, childhood and mystery – the everyday, reality, and even art was banal if it was not aestheticized, changed, or mystified in some way. Language had to be fragmented, distorted and sometimes meaningless, the family was not considered as a high value by modernists - they were mostly in search of extraordinary experiences, and humanity was mostly seen through scopes of utopia or dystopia. Ibsen was presenting real life problems, the family and the everyday as something that is under a threat from the early capitalism, he was concerned with the changes that the modern times impose on the self, he was self-reflexive and considerate of the common and the everyday. He was observing and noticing the changes that the modernists are a consequence of, and, as Østerud suggests, he was also introducing modernist aesthetic techniques and criteria. On the formal level, he shows more inclinations towards innovations and experiments as his writings develop. His last plays are the ones that are closest to modernist aesthetics in this sense. While his are mostly reactions to the melodramatic conventions, the modernists' reactions are against realism and realistic presentation. Therefore, Ibsen can not be labelled as a pure modernist, but as a *proto-modernist*, as a crossing, transitory bridge from romanticism to modernism.

In “Anticipations of Modernism in the Age of Romanticism” (1985), Brian Rowley emphasizes the fact that both romanticism and modernism appeared at the end of a century – romanticism at the end of 18th, and modernism at the end of 19th century. The concept of ‘the turn of the century’ is usually marked as a period when change is ‘naturally’ expected. Therefore, paradoxically, change usually ‘naturally’ arrives at turns of centuries. When change is present in the general expectations of a nation, a culture, or all humanity, change actually occurs, inspired by the idea that it can happen. Change at the turn of centuries is a performed phenomenon, a public construct. Usually it is connected to apocalyptic visions and prophecies (it is enough to think of the recent ‘millennial bug’ concept that was supposed to bring the performance of computers to a global collapse just before the New Year 2000 and the amount of attention and belief this idea attracted), but it can also be connected to positive utopian visions (like the idea of the New Age).

Fritz Paul connected the *fin de siècle* mythem with the metaphysical landscapes in Ibsen’s later plays and with representation of space and the vertical scheme of climbing and falling in his later works.

The experience of space and height, the acromanic aspect as passion is carried over in process of visualisation typical for the *fin de siècle*; it also attains central importance in the dramas of Maeterlinck, Strindberg and Chekov. Seen in the context of the period, it is no accident that the attempt of the main characters to repeat the ascension of the tower or the mountain ends catastrophically; transcendence can only be experienced in radical negativity. One sees in this, besides the modish cultural pessimism and decadence of the turn of the century, that consciousness of the existential crisis of the secularized man, that characterizes the often puppet like figures of the drama. (Paul 1994 : 18)

Fritz Paul is inclined to look at the turn of the century only from the pessimistic point of view and neglects some of the utopian images, like the futurists had, for example. He calls Ibsen’s attitude when writing *When We Dead Awaken* a “paradoxical, metaphysically founded anti-transcendentalism” that reflects “not only the departure of the 19th century, but also the arrival of the 20th.” (Paul 1994 : 30) Similar is Simon Williams’s reading of degeneration as the dark side of progress in Ibsen’s plays, as a result of the forces of nature and society that are always influencing the human with diversely intentioned forces. As a result of this, the modern society is plundered by (sexual) degenerative, even daemonic forces of nature, and since women are the temptresses for sexual pleasures, Williams sees that

Ibsen's later plays are centred around two conflicts, the need for the individual to hold balance between the demands of convention and the promptings of nature, and, more personally for him, for the creative artist to reconcile the necessity of forcing the vital stuff of life into form with his recognition through the eyes of woman that violates the stuff of life. The human condition is extraordinarily tense. The mind is no longer a tightly structured unit, parameters of experience cannot be clearly defined, masculine identity, formerly so sure and defined, is now ductile in the hands of woman (...) but the moment the tension snaps and the individual surrenders to one or the two forces pulling him, disaster is inevitable." (Williams 1985 : 257)

This disaster that Williams connects to the degenerative force of the modern times is actually the disaster of nature and impulses overrunning culture (in the Freudian tradition culture is a systematic restraint of the drives). The turn of the century is a return to nature, i.e., to the culture-destructive degenerative forces, and when the (male) character (like Anton Rubek, or Solness for example) gets driven by these forces in the effort to "reach the peak of his creative and sexual potential" he inevitably ends with death. In his reading of the degenerative forces of nature in Ibsen's late work Williams concludes that Ibsen suggests that man were the ones who were holding "the balance between degeneration and impossibility of fulfilment and growth. If he surrenders to either, he is lost. Life and art, society and nature, morality and biology can never be reconciled." (Williams 1985 : 257)

Lisbeth P. Wærp finds the *fin de siècle*, negative attitude in all of the characters in *When We Dead Awaken*, and points to the simple fact that the play is located at places that imply sickness and recovery – at a spa, at a sanatorium. She reads the play itself as a criticism of two utopian visions that the characters in the play are allegorizing (personifying) their ideal to be. All of the characters are split in some way in the play. "Det gjør de ved hjelp av to forskjellige utopier, som imidlertid begge er varianter av myten om et bedre liv, et paradis, nemlig myten om det naturlige liv (Ulfhejm og Maja) og det lovede land (Rubek og Irene). Men begge avsløres som illusjoner. De er og blir myter eller utopier." (Wærp 1999 : 119) For Lisbeth P. Wærp, this play's purpose is to show the irony of the hope in a new life, in a new world, to parodize the dream-visions of the perfect life and the perfect world. The play is not a disillusionment drama, but it is a play that denies the possibility of a disillusionment. "Troen på at illusjoner kan forkastes en gang for alle, er jo også selv en variant av paradismyten, idet også den gir (falske) forhåpninger om et bedre liv uten illusjonenes forblindelse." (Wærp 1999: 120)

At the end of the 19th century, the industrialization and the new technological discoveries were a part of the utopian vision that was going to change humanity (most

radically embodied in futurism). In Ibsen's works, this idea is embodied best in the character John Gabriel Borkman. The play *John Gabriel Borkman* was written in 1896, 3 years before *When We Dead Awaken*, and it depicts ruins of love and a whole family that come as a result of the utopian dream of industrialisation. John Gabriel Borkman ends as a deluded, half-mad and isolated character that had the capitalist dream of industrialization and profit as life-dream. "Unlike Shaw or Brecht, Ibsen's study of the finance capitalist is unconnected with any program for restructuring society. Instead, more like Shakespeare and Moliere, he accepts the organization of society as it is, and lets the lives that result speak for themselves" (Fjelde 1978 : 939) As Fjelde notices, the myth of the utopia of industrial capitalism and the possibilities it brings is deconstructed by Ibsen who was able to see through its illusion.

According to Rowley, romanticism and modernism are also associated with "decisive political change" (Rowley 1985: 17), romanticism with the French revolution, and modernism with the decay of the upper class in Europe and the beginning of alliances between states that led to the First World War. Romanticism and modernism were also characterized by a "dissolving of reasonable expectations" (Rowley 1985: 17), meaning that both of the movements, in their own way, were concerned with topics spanning from real to unreal, reason to psyche, logic to illogic. The early capitalist times were times of great instability and changes, because the world was not used to analyzing the new capitalist market. Every investment was made on chance, and therefore people were gaining or loosing in a radical fast paste. One could become very wealthy or very poor overnight. "Respectability founded on chance: that is the economic fact of the 19th century which was associated with a demography of expansion and isolation." (Sennett 1977 : 139)

In *A Singular Modernity* (2002) Fredric Jameson finds that "the only satisfactory semantic meaning of modernity lies in its association with capitalism," and he rejects any singular and definable, 'correct' use of this word and its meaning that is outside an analyses of capitalism's emerging and its impact on society. (Jameson 2002 : 13) He discards analyses based on subjectivity, i.e. on the psychological changes of the subject as the construct of the modernist ideology. Modernity as a concept discussed by modernists "...is itself modern, and dramatizes its own claims," and the theory or modernity established by modernists is "itself little more than the projection of its own rhetorical structure onto the themes and content in question: the theory of modernity is little more than a projection of the trope itself."

(Jameson 2002 : 34) Jameson poses modernity as a construct that is itself consisting of the constant repetition of the general characteristics of modernity - through analyses of the world and various art works created in the age of modernity modernists were confirming the basic characteristics of modernity. What Jameson also suggests with this view on modernity is that modernity and modernism was in fact performed by modernists, that it was a prescription, a trope that was constantly iterated to the point of cliché. That is why he throws off the theories and presumptions that function as a confirmation of the performative guidance that this trope offers, and suggests to look at the social and economic changes that led to the forming of the trope, instead of repeating it over and over.

Modernity and modernism were trying to break with their predecessor – romanticism. Freedom, or libertinism, was the real big issue of the modern times: freedom from the Church and its clerics, freedom from the landlords and feudalism, freedom of the individual. The belief in this freedom is what caused the emergence of capitalism – the freedom to earn and change one's class on the basis of the capital one owns. Individuality was also a new concept, typical for early capitalism – and one that our contemporary society is based on as well: all modern people prefer to be seen as individuals, and lack of individuality is perceived as a form of imprisonment, or as a lack of character. At the same time, the effort to achieve individuality brings a sense of not-belonging and alienation, a specific melancholy mood and a sort of a chronic existential crisis for the modern person. The failure of the effort to achieve individuality and personal freedom meant not performing being modern correctly and successfully, it meant an unsuccessful performance of the modern times. In the early capitalist times these processes and the need to keep up with the modern past changed society radically. The technology and the machines that were the crucial factor for the industrialization processes and led to forming of corporations also played a crucial factor in these processes. And in these processes lies the root of McKenzie's triple understanding of performance (of culture, of the market, of technology).

Ibsen came from a family conditioned by the result of these processes, and because of this, he had felt the consequences of "the drama of modernity" (Nygaard 1997) in a personal and severe way. As it is emphasized in the edition on Henrik Ibsen's early childhood, *Growing up in Skien*,

many Ibsen's dramas open precisely with the first Act set in an idyllic bourgeois living-room behind the curtains. Then the disaster is played out. The threats manifest themselves. The characters are confronted with experiences they had hoped to forget. Security is lost, feelings are given free rein. Then a thousand disguises are donned in order to preserve self-esteem." (Mohr 2005 : 20)

In this excerpt by Mohr the ideals of the bourgeois home are analyzed as under the threat of being uncovered as what they really are – only ideals. That is why the ideal had to constantly be performed, be repeated, preserved. The bourgeois ideal was part of the performance stratum of 19th century, it was covering reality and had to be performed, shown to the public, and the 'thousand disguises' were 'donned' in order to preserve it. The need for this preservation comes from the psyche, from the need for stability, 'to preserve self-esteem,' but it is ultimately shaped by the cravings of society and its need for the individuals to perform correctly and efficiently so that it can function and preserve itself.

Ibsen was presenting families and individuals on the edge of their economical, psychical, as well as physical fall, thus raising issues connected to the establishing of the new bourgeois values and the insecurity and danger of the early modern capitalist times. The melancholic reaction to the loss of the wealth of his family that took place in his early childhood can be read in the pessimistic attitude in his works towards the real background of the new bourgeoisie that does their best to preserve the newly acquired wealth and position in society. Experiencing the ugly side of industrialization and modernization, Ibsen was critically positioned towards the consequences of these changes of the public life on the private realm of the family, and even more on the private self. Richard Sennett looks at the bourgeoisie as the new critical class in an undergoing process of establishment everywhere around Europe. As much as the countries and their own bourgeoisie were differing from each other, still the "cosmopolitan bourgeoisie took on in the last century some of the characteristics of an international class; it was not the proletariat of the industrial countries which did so." (Sennett 1977 : 137- 138)

This new bourgeoisie was favouring realism, both in the dramatic arts and in the prose writings, as well philosophies that were dissecting nature and society in a positivistic manner, and it was obsessed with issues such as determinism, heredity, environment, evolution, Darwinism and the relation between the individual and the environment. Idealism in the romantic sense was rejected as non-pragmatic. In his book on literary realism and the idea of determinism, *Man and Society in Nineteenth-*

Century Realism, Maurice Larkin shows that Ibsen, similarly to Buchner and Flaubert, rejected the feudal-times concept of determinism because it gave too little freedom to man's actions by forcing the idea of a pre-given destiny, completely putting chance and arbitrariness aside.

The abandoning of the concept of determinism is crucial for the modern times and for the emerging significance of performance and performativity. The abandoning of this concept brings the freedom of changing and adopting new identities, of performing differently in society, according to the social and cultural circumstances. In Ibsen's works it is society that is corrupting and turning the human towards pathological actions, and the corrupted and distorted qualities are after transferred to the younger generations through the laws of heredity and nature.

Ibsen's dramatic use of congenital syphilis [in *Ghosts*] is primarily a symptom and a symbol of the insidious influence of provincial hypocrisy and narrow mindedness...Ibsen saw the individual frustrated at all levels of society, including the narrow intimacy of the family...Yet the play [*A Doll's House*] is not primarily concerned with women's emancipation as such: it is a study of the individual as victim of society's assumptions. (Larkin 1977 : 185)

In this respect, perhaps a rare example of society having a positive effect on 'deterministic hereditary madness' in Ibsen's work can be seen in Ellida Wangel, who conforms to society's rules and the conventional marriage. This helps her to overcome the madness that originates in her constant contact only with nature and the inherited narrative of the suicidal nature of her mother. Her isolation and the life in the lighthouse can be seen as a factor that only served to emphasize the irrational, inherited side of her character, and her willingness to come in contact with society and to accept the roles of a mother and a wife serve as an escape from this plunging in the forces of the environment. In a sense, it is as if the contact with society had awakened Ellida to struggle against the assumptions of the presumed hereditary madness. Ibsen shows how the individual has to be aware of the social environment and the accusations and threats it brings, and as a solution he points that the only way to remain a self within society is by adopting awareness of this dialectical relation, not by plunging in one's own personal world away from society, or by defying and battling society's rules without being aware of their mechanism and their impact on the self.

The portrayal of Ellida Wangel, (as well as of Nora Helmer) shows a growth from a situation of performing a role without awareness to accepting reality as it is.

The case of Ellida Wangel is especially complex because of her ‘madness.’ All the other characters in the play perceive Ellida as mad, and she also performs madness for them. It is unclear how much she really is not well, and how much she is performing not to be well in front of others. She is repetitively performing a bathing ritual in which she waits for the sea to bring to her the man she longs for, the mysterious stranger, and then suddenly changes her mind and decides to learn how to be a mother and a wife when she is offered freedom to choose her own future. She was horrified of the power that men wanted to impose on her, both her husband and the stranger, and when she felt that she is left to choose freely, she made the choice that was more secure. She chose bourgeois reality.

ELLIDA. [to the stranger] Your will hasn't a shred of power over me...

...

ELLIDA. Oh, don't you understand that the change came – that it had to come – when I could choose freedom?

WANGEL. And the unknown – it doesn't attract you anymore?

ELLIDA. It neither terrifies nor attracts. I've been able to see deep into it – and I could have plunged in, if I'd wanted to. I could have chosen it now. And that's why, also, I could reject it.

...

ELLIDA. Oh, I don't know what to say. Except that you've been a good doctor for me. You found, and you dared to use the right treatment – the only one that could help me. (Ibsen: 687)

The solution she comes to is sudden and unexpected, but she mentions the awareness of her own attraction by the unknown as the main reason for it. Ellida praises her husband, Dr. Wangel, as a good doctor for her, who dared to use the right treatment. It is ambiguous how she knows what the right treatment for her is and how she accepts it immediately. She accepts being given freedom (the same freedom that Nora allows to herself when she leaves the home of Torvad Helmer), but it is as if she is knowingly staging herself in order to be given that freedom. Her husband is her doctor, her psychologist, the one that helps her to ‘acclimatize’. However, it is her that helps him to ‘acclimatize’ to her freedom as well. The older gentleman she is married to performs the role of a tutor, a teacher, a psychologist, a father-like figure before he really can become her husband. He ‘saved’ her from poverty when they married, and then he ‘saved’ her from madness when she accepted him. After his role of a saviour was performed successfully, he can approach her.

In this play we see the characters struggle to learn how to perform being a family, and how they finally learn how to ‘acclimatize’ to one another, thus denying and breaking out of determinism and determined roles. What is of importance is that

the breaking out of determinism and determined roles is done by *learning and performing new roles consciously*. The need to learn new performatives comes from the need for survival in society – in its very last essence this need is determined by financial existence. And here lies the critical message on the power relations of society in Ibsen's works.

One of the socially and culturally 'determined' roles of the pre-modern times, especially in romanticism, was the role of the artist. The artist was idealized as a channel of divine messages that were transcending the boundaries of limited human nature. The artist was seen as if gifted with a natural and inborn, determined inclination and sensitivity for these divine messages. In their turn, these messages were thought of as serving the purpose of elevating humanity. This concept was also abandoned by Ibsen, and the artist and the problem of the artist's nature are the main topic of his last play, *When We Dead Awaken*. Toril Moi sees the beginning of modernism in the abandoning of this concept of the romanticist idealism. The concept of the romanticist idealism refers to art as a materialization of three qualities: beauty, truth and goodness, and was not really referring to art as an object of the market. However, the modern times also brought the change of looking at art as belonging to the industrial society and the market, and they changed the idealised status of the artist. This can be clearly observed in Ibsen, who at the beginning of his career was writing plays that fit the romanticist's ideals and literary conventions, while at the end he was writing plays that were very close to the modernist aesthetics. According to Toril Moi, to "trace Ibsen's aesthetic transformations [means] to trace the birth of European modernism," (Moi 2006 : 67)

In the centennial edition of Ibsen's collected works there is mentioned a connection between *Brand* (one of his first plays) and *When We Dead Awaken* (his last play). Ibsen had seen one of his first plays just as he was writing his last:

I København fikk Ibsen for første gang i sitt liv se <<Brand>> opført; stykket gikk på Dagmar-teatret med Martinus Nielsen i hovedrolen. Til skuespillerinnen fru Oda Nielsen, skuespillerens hustru, som dikteren satt sammen med under forestillingen, sa han: <<Dette tar. Dette er hele min ungdom; jeg har ikke tenkt på <<Brand>> i tredve år >> - (se Politiken 20. mars 1928 s. 6.). Folk, som stod nær, har fortalt at Ibsen lå våken natten etter forestillingen og arbeidet med ideen til sitt nye skuespill, til <<Når vi døde vågner>>. (A. Fibiger: Henrik Ibsen s. 14 in Seip 1936: 191),

notes Didrik Arup Seip in the Introduction (Innledning) to the play. Although this is not a sufficient proof to claim that *When We Dead Awaken* and *Brand* are connected,

the reflection of the older play in the more recent one is very obvious in the ending of the two plays. *Brand* was written using romantic conventions, *When We Dead Awaken* using realist and modernist techniques.

Because of his in-between position towards romanticism and modernism, or what Toril Moi calls ‘romantic idealism’ and ‘modernist ideology,’ Ibsen’s works manifest a specific double scepticism: scepticism towards the possibility of completely expressing the idealist’s creative urge and strive as an effort to achieve elevated being, as well as scepticism towards the possibility for the idealist to find complete meaning and fulfilment in the realists’ focus on the everyday, the family, and society. Ibsen’s specific aesthetics, or his own specific *proto-modernism*, his very own form of idealism and realism are a path for understanding the establishing of the European modernisms, and a clue for understanding his works. Moi analyses the works of Ibsen in the light of the two traditions of romantic idealism and modern realism and comes to the conclusion that

Ibsen’s contemporary plays are concerned with the difficult task of finding a way to honour the dreams of creativity of revolutionary romanticism while at the same time neglecting idealist aesthetics. At his most optimistic, Ibsen thinks that our best chance of expressive freedom and of love comes in ordinary human relationships. At his most pessimistic, he shows that precisely those relationships can easily become the source of desperate meaninglessness. At all times, however, Ibsen sees that both the longing for the (romantic) absolute and the disappointed, sceptical recoil from that longing are essentially destructive. (Moi 2006 : 13)

The ‘sceptical recoil’ from the longing for ideals originates in the new attitude towards art and the artist that the new industrial reality and the new view on the world imposed, and this topic is also present in *When We Dead Awaken*.

In a reading of the play in connection to the position of the artist within the ambiguities of modernity, Helge Rønning focuses Rubek’s various descriptions of the sculpture “The Day of Resurrection” as a translation of his own confused attitude towards society. Looking at the artist from the market and profit – oriented demands of modernised society, Rønning sees the portrayal of Rubek in the play as an awakening towards the hard truth of social existence in modernity. (Rønning 1994 : 56-57) The first version of the sculpture was an idealized image that fitted the romantic ideal of the artist’s self. “It is a description of the pure expression of the artist’s pure nature. Later Rubek loses the joy of his own masterpiece because it had become contaminated by social demands. One would say by the artistic market.” (Rønning 1994 : 56)

Rønning sees the portrait busts with the grotesque faces that Rubek later sculpts as a reflection of the self-disappointment in the pure nature of the artist and as a rendering of the “critical impulse” of art in the sense that as much it is a commodity, art is a criticism of society as well. The second version of the sculpture he sees as a pragmatic opening to the role of the artist in society, as a self portrayal that serves the function of expressing feelings in public, while at the same time, the feelings displayed are a result of observation, of self-reflection upon one’s own position. “This is a depiction of the contradictory functions of art – as vision and critique on the one hand and as an object for cult and display on the other; utopian and apologetic, as a transition of and accommodation to society.” (Rønning 1994 : 57)

It is a bit obscure how Rønning came to the conclusion that the first version of the sculpture was “a pure description of the artist’s pure nature.” It is a representation of an idealised image of Resurrection, the pure nature of Resurrection, and this pure nature is not the artist himself. It is “the most beautifully and most sublimely portrayed (as) a pure young woman – untouched by worldly experience, awakening to the light and the glory, with nothing ugly or unclean to cast off.” (Ibsen : 1072) The true nature of the artist is what is actually Rubek’s constant identity problem – at the time of the first modelling of the sculpture his identity fitted the romantics’ idealized nature of the artist. In the following years the artist had found out how the world in reality functions and then he changed the sculpture.

However, there is no pointing that the joy for the first sculpture was ruined because of disappointment in the market, because of contamination by social demands of the artistic market. In fact, I would argue that if Rønning looks at the first version as fitting the demands of the romantics’ ideal of the artist, then the second version is just the same – only fitting the demands of the modernist ideal. The first sculpture was also designed to fit the needs of the romanticist’s art market, since art in those times, however idealized, was also created for money. The reason why the second version of the sculpture had become a masterpiece lies in its fitting the ideals for a modernist masterpiece. The romantic artists had a market as well, and both of the versions of the sculpture are always already contaminated by the market, which, if we follow Rønning’s analyses of Rubek’s disappointment as a disappointment in the market-value of art would lead to a conclusion that Rubek would be unsatisfied even if he did not change the sculpture anyway.

The sculpting of the second version is a portrayal of the artist in remorse for what he had missed, a remorse for missing out on reality while being drowned in idealism. The portrait busts in part are a rendering of a critical impulse towards the exchange value and the real value of art, and Rubek mockingly mentions that the rich he portrays pay very good. (Ibsen : 1036) However, he becomes as rich from his art as they are, and in this way, the portrait busts are a reflection of the cynicism towards his own double sided nature as well. The market and exchange of goods are very important in this play, but it is a mistake to look at the play only from this aspect.

One message that could come from Rubek's portrait art is that money do not make animals more human, or perhaps, that they make humans more animal like. Another important fact is that the animals that Ibsen portrays are the tamed, obedient, domestic animals – and this “domesticity” points to the fact that the conformity that comes with wealth stupefies people's rebellious and free nature, their search for freedom so much praised by the bourgeois. Thus, Ibsen is not merely showing the value and exchange value of art, but he is criticizing the point of view of exchange value as ‘domesticating,’ as conformist.

In the same respect, I would argue against Jørgen Stender Clausen's reading of Ibsen's *When We Dead Awaken* as if automatically dealing with Ibsen himself, because of dealing with life and art.

In other words *Når vi døde vågner* deals with life and art, it deals, that is, with himself, and the play's description of the commercialisation of art... ...where the fetishistic value of the goods is “paid for in good faith” and in this case “like gold,” is just as modern as the definition of the role of the author. It is almost inevitable, at this point, to consider once again the parallel between the author and the epic narrator. Ibsen's view of life is materialistic, he values life, but sits eternally in his own hell, because human beings make life hell. (Clausen 2002 : 116)

It is more than obvious that the play deals with art, life and the author, but to claim that it is a self-portrait of a misanthropic person that thinks life is hell is completely unjustified. Even if put into a relation of sameness, the epic narrator and the author of a text never (unless they have implicitly so underlined that they do, or unless it is clearly a biographical work) coincide completely. When the text is a play, the situation is even more difficult. Isn't then every character of the play the epic narrator? How many selves then does the writer have? To claim that Ibsen's view is materialistic is one sided as much as claiming that he is the epic narrator, because an exclusively materialistic view on life is absent in this play.

What Ibsen criticises in *When We Dead Awaken* is an exclusively idealistic view on life, and then he criticises a materialistic view as an escape from idealism. Ibsen is a materialist as much as he is an idealist and a metaphysic, since in many of his prose plays material one-mindedness leads to unhappiness that ends in a transformation to another state of being or death. The best example for this attitude is John Gabriel Borkman, who is isolated and deluded because of his materialism and who rejected love and the ideal of family because of it. He dies at the end of the play while returning to the image of his money and industry. Nora Helmer also experiences a transformation that results from her material views on life. She thought that providing financial back up for her family would save her family ideal and her “vidunderlig” ideal of the home and love. After her disillusionment, she experiences a transformation from a performing house-wife doll to a person. In *When We Dead Awaken*, transformation due to changes in the attitudes towards materialism and idealism happens to Arnold Rubek, who is isolated from all people around him, but not because life and human beings are hell. And certainly we can not know if Ibsen thought life and human beings are hell. What is clear from this play is that the main character is confused and does not really feel as if belonging to society because of artistic self-idealism, and that he does not really feel happier when he tries to live a materialist-oriented life, i.e., when he buys a villa at Lake Taunitz and a home in the city and searches for a life in light and happiness.

Modernity was conditioned by the appearance of the new type of society, the new bourgeois class and capitalism. These changes created and sharpened the public-private dichotomy, which, in return, changed the relations in the family, ideals and aesthetics. Modernity also brought the need to perform, to create public personas and private life-lies, but it also performed itself on a more global scale, as a trope.

3. Performing Modernity, Performing Modernism

Richard Sennett underlines the fact that the most psychic distortions of modern society are related to narcissism, which can be narrated as an “obsession with what this person, this event means to me.” (Sennett 1977 : 8) The origins of narcissistic tendencies of constant self-justification and self-reflection lie in the

protestant ethics. This self that has to legitimate itself and its actions constantly is really problematic when it comes to the private and the public sphere, especially when it becomes a phenomenon typical of an age and of two continents. One can say that the age of modernity is characterized by a “trade-off between greater psychic absorption and lessened social participation.” (Sennett 1977 : 12)

John Jervis also views the modern human as burdened by the ability of reflecting on his own actions and experiences, as a necessary consequence of what he calls ‘the project’ of modernity. (Jervis 1998: 9-10) ‘The project’ of modernity is an expression that Jervis uses in order to explicate the constructed circular relation between self-reflexivity as a prerequisite of the modern mood and of self-reflexivity as an immanent consequence of the changes that come with modernity. The quality of ambivalence typical of the modern person comes as a natural result of the dialectical and simultaneous experiencing of the changes that come with modernity, together with the required awareness of them. In order to be able to understand the changes, it is necessary to be distanced from them. Therefore, a person belonging to the age of modernity has to be utterly present and perceptive, but distant at the same time.

In this respect, Ibsen’s self-exile from Norway, and the fact that he was writing about Norwegian society, Norwegian context and the Norwegian bourgeois family while residing in other European countries can be understood as a necessary distancing from the changes and the traumatic experiences from these same changes that were happening in his country during his lifetime. While reflecting on them, understanding them and presenting them, Ibsen was also observing the changes that were happening at the same time within the specific nation - contexts and their own specific histories and developments. His works are also a reaction to the observation of these changes as well. In a sense, Ibsen’s life and his works can be seen as one of the first announcement of ‘the projects of modernity’, or, even better, as a ‘personal project’ - an artist who spends a life time to reflect and write about the changes that were happening at the same time he was experiencing them, i.e. at the same time they were affecting him.

Naomi Lebowitz characterises Ibsen’s works as uncovering of the need to connect to the Great World (or the utopian idea of the modern, new society, corresponding to the idea of the Third World in *Emperor and Galilean*) through the parody and satire of the small world, or the bourgeois reality and the home. “His concern with social freedom disguises the passion for Freedom; his virulent parodic

depiction of the small world of bourgeois duty camouflages the rich and relentless presence of the Great World of liberated spirit, desire, and art.” (Lebowitz 1990 : 1) Lebowitz suggests that Ibsen was in fact a believer in the Great World and Freedom in the most idealist sense, and that his realism and criticism of society serves the purpose of suggesting these ideas, or better, the human need for ideals.

True Freedom’s fear of consummation and climax makes a friend of irony and parody in Ibsen’s art, dedicated to not finishing off the struggle to reach the Great World. To stay honest, it needs as continuous a story as does the Romantic return to original innocence, to keep us away from dying from disappointment. (...) Ibsen’s failures and tenuous, fragile success never point us backward to a state of merged maternal peace, but always, by way of exile, deeper on the way to our natural, renounced medium of rich mystery and glad fullness of being. (...) Like the therapist, Ibsen confronts us “with our own shadows,” and like the patient, he stands as his own judge between his darkness and his light. This is the depth from which we can sense, from time to time, even if we are not quite ready for a real homeland, that we might become citizens of the Great World that has been so long feared, so long desired. (Lebowitz 1990 : 233 - 234)

What Lebowitz suggests is that Ibsen was both self-aware of his own beliefs and ideas, as well as that he made this awareness a project that can be uncovered in his art. Instead of being a propagator of the Great World and Freedom, he was writing works that showed how the modern world constricts this need in the human. In this sense, his works can be read as a project, as a meaningful and deliberate message. As he himself has pointed out, his works should be read in chronological order, as a development of a project that ends with the *Epilogue*. Therefore, they are a personal project as well, reflecting on the changes of the author as he was progressing in his work.

This idea of the project of modernity touches upon the performed nature of modernity. Self-reflexivity, which is the main characteristic of the modern human means thinking of and influencing one’s own behaviour, it means a need to correct one’s self in all relations. The need for this comes from the outside, from culture and society that demand presence and immediate reaction, but it is executed in the inside, in one’s psyche. This relation between the outside and the inside corresponds to the public and the public. Self-reflective thinking looks back on one’s actions, it happens after something has occurred, but the purpose of it and the need for it comes in order to learn better how to respond in a similar situation the next time it appears, at the moment it appears. The guidance for the responses in situations comes from society, it is the ‘prescribed’ behaviour in certain situations. On all levels, modernity is a project

that asks for a performative individual to perform correctly, so that the global project of modernity can be performed correctly.

The idea of the project of modernity is rooted in Jauss' idea of history as cyclical and reactionary, as a relation between the new and the ancient, or innovation and tradition. Through analyzing how the term 'modern' appears in history each time there is a consciousness of a new and establishing attitude towards the ancients, i.e. towards a previous tradition, Habermas defines modernity (and with this modernism, which he calls aesthetic modernity) as a 'modern' tradition that cuts away the ties with any specific history. (Habermas 1983 : 3-4) It is exactly this cutting away that establishes modernity and modernism as radically new. All new movements that were conscious of their reactionary nature were modern when they first appeared as a reaction to establishment, but the ones that were using the term 'modern' in order to explicate their innovative attitude had a conscious, inspiring connection and relation towards a previous period or movement as well. Modernity radically cut off the connection with the ancients and tradition.

That is to say, the term 'modern' appeared and re-appeared exactly during those periods in Europe when the consciousness of a new epoch formed itself through a renewed relationship to the ancients – whenever, moreover, antiquity was considered a model to be recovered through some kind of imitation." (Habermas 1983 : 4)

This imitation can also be seen and thought of as a performance, as an acting, or a re-enacting of past values and methods. Modernity, however, was not imitating a previous reality in order to recover a model; in fact, it was building its own model as the reality of here and now, as an adaptation-craving, flux-like repetition of what is modern and fashionable.

Brian Johnstons connected the national project of Ibsen's youth to the need to re-connect with a "living but exiled spiritual past, seeking to regain the stage of his theatre and thus to regain its place in modern consciousness." (Johnston 1994 : 652) He claims this to be a feature of all of Ibsen's works, and that this need is responsible for the entering of myth, legend and cultural history in them. According to Johnston, Ibsen was aware that the only way to create new, fresh and modern art is to reconnect it to the past. (Johnston: 653) Using the concepts of the Platonic (or Hegelian) concept of memory as *anamnesis*, as "unforgetting," Johnston claims that Ibsen's works act as a reminder of the modernist's repressed *anamnesis* of spiritual truths. He

also connects Ibsen's works to another concept of memory and history, corresponding to meticulous and constant scholarly gathering of facts and information, which can best be seen in the historical dramas. According to Johnston,

In the early work up to *Emperor and Galilean*, Ibsen is looking at the past from the stand-point of his contemporary world and its needs; in the later work he is looking at the contemporary world from the standpoint of the past and its requirements. The later Ibsen has gone over to the ranks of the occult, of the reproachful ghosts. (Johnston 1994 : 655)

The need to turn to the realms of the past comes from modernity's effort to erase it. From the Hegelian perspective, Ibsen's dramatic art, with its references to the past would serve the purpose of deepening and awakening the conceptual range of people, opening it up to further realms than the present moment of here and now. Similarly to Østerud's view of Ibsen's dramas as double realist-sacred dramas, Johnston suggests that Ibsen's modernism is actually an attempt to transform modernity, to "take on the identity of the mythopoeic, myth-saturated world of his imagination, to render reality occult." (Johnston 1994 : 658) In all the realist settings of Ibsen Johnston sees archetypes, and in all the actions archetypal actions. These covered archetypes serve the purpose to estrange reality, to uncover the known as unknown, to show that what we are used to as reality is actually not our nature, to fill what is familiar with unfamiliarity. However, what Johnston fails to mention is that these archetypes do not necessarily have to connect to the national past and history. They are also the memory of the psyche, the unconscious part of all humanity. This is what Johnston refers to as the occult, the mythical. However, myths are parts of the imaginary structures of humanity, just as archetypes, symbols and schemes. What the modern individual solves with self-reflection and psychotherapy the mythical thinking societies were solving through iteration of mythical and ritual experiences.

The ancient world turned imaginary concepts in images and myths, but the modern world is overflowing with them as well. They are present in the modern prose (of Joyce, James, Hardy, Kafka as few examples), and also in modern drama. They can be estranged and recognized in the modern world only by self-awareness and self-reflection, because their conscious use implies an awareness of them as concepts. Psychology and psychiatry are products of the modern world, they are a result of the first explorations of the imaginary structures of the human. National myths are only one way of using these concepts. Using them in literary works is another. What is

interesting about Ibsen is his use of these concepts in realist settings, as psychic, other-worldly, mythical intrusions in modern reality.

I believe that from all of Ibsen's modern(ist) plays the *Epilogue* is the one that is the most self-reflexive. It is also a play about an artist driven by the romantic ideal of elevation through creation and idealism. Ibsen's self-conscious art intrigued David Rosengarten (1980) to look at it from the three essential elements of a work of art: the work of art itself, the creator, and the external world they both inhabit. This self-consciousness is a result of the turn of artistic solipsism (i.e., from the romantic notion of the artist himself as the only responsible for the creation) to aestheticism, or meta-art. (Rosengarten 1980 : 10)

There are two opposing forces that shape the kind of art that questions its ontological status – the kind of art *When We Dead Awaken* is: one being the force that keeps the work of art focused on itself and quite divorced from the outside world; and the other one that turns the work, through the work, back to the world beyond the work. This later force, when it predominates, results in self-conscious works that use their self-consciousness to explore certain themes that have been suggested by a preoccupation with self-consciousness. (Rosengarten 1980 : 15)

This relationship between art and the outside world becomes a metaphor for the relations and tensions between a man and his environment, his reality, his world. Rosengarten views the modern self-conscious plays and dramatists as deliberately using the tools of realism and naturalism, as well as the common contemporary contexts (such as the home of the new bourgeois class) only to demonstrate that this whole context resembles a game, that it is an transcendent, eternal structure that the artists have become aware of. That is why they also portray characters that are aware of these same tensions.

Ibsen began his artistic career when romanticism was historically being replaced by naturalism and aestheticism, which ultimately led to the emerging of the many modernisms. By paralleling Schenk's concerns of romantic art as "*the subjective expression of feeling and the glorification of the artist,*" and Shelly's "*concerns of art (poetry) as an awakening and enlarging of the mind, as something divine and central, THE KNOWLEDGE that comprehends all science and thought,*" Rosengarten states that from his earliest works, Ibsen was interested in and actually writing about "clusters of elements" that present a persistent attempt to balance out the ideal that art could improve society, lift its awareness, make it better with the personal idealized self of the artist. (Rosengarten 1980 : 46) He is inclined to viewing

Ibsen's career as a collision between these two lines, an emerging conflict that "digs deeper and deeper into the art itself, more and more becomes the very subject matter of the art itself." (Rozengarten 1980 : 46)

The last play by Ibsen shows how complete devotion to art ends up in nothing else but the destruction of the artist himself. In the destruction of the artist that is completely devoted to the art lays the message of the destruction of the romantic ideal of the artist that serves as a medium of divine messages. The fusion between the artist as an individual and the idea of poetry as the ultimate truth for which the artist serves only as a medium tears itself apart in the work of Ibsen. Rosengraten sees this tearing apart as the emerging self-reflexive subject which created modern art.

When We Dead Awaken is constructed around the emerging conscious and self-reflective mood of the modernists. The main character, Arnold Rubek, self-reflectively presented his own desperate position in his only masterpiece, the sculpture titled "The Resurrection Day". This masterpiece can be seen as a narrative of his soul, and after its creation he could not articulate anything that was worthy of being called a masterpiece, he was sculpting only ordered grotesque portrait busts – as if trapped in the typical modernist disbelief in expression and understanding, in a grotesque image of the everyday. His only master piece was ideally supposed to represent a single woman's body - an idealized women's body, an innocent young woman that is waking from the dead, completely unaware of the cataclysmic atmosphere around her. This is an idealized romantic image of beauty, religious truth and pious goodness put on a pedestal. In his youth, Arnold Rubek was an idealistic artist who wanted to sculpt the ideal of beauty – the romantic ideal of beauty – through an idealized representation of his model.

RUBEK. (*drops his hands from his eyes and stares straight ahead*). When I discovered you, I knew right away how I ought to use you for my masterpiece.

IRENE. You called it "Resurrection Day." I call it our child.

RUBEK. I was young then – with no knowledge of life. The Resurrection, I thought, could be the most beautifully and most sublimely portrayed as a pure young woman – untouched by worldly experience, awakening to the light and the glory, with nothing ugly or unclean to cast off.

...

RUBEK. In the following years, Irene, I learned how this world works. My conception of "Resurrection Day" became something larger and more – more complex. The little round pedestal on which your statue stood, erect and isolated – no longer had space for everything I wanted now in the composition –

...

RUBEK. I enlarged the composition with things I saw through my own eyes in the world around me. I had to. Nothing else would do, Irene. I extended the pedestal – to make it wide and spacious. And on it I set a piece of the curving, bursting earth. And out of the cracks in the earth human

beings swarm up now, with disguised animal faces. Women and men – exactly as I knew them from life.

...

IRENE. (*breathless with anticipation*) But the centre of all that swarming mass is the young woman, radiant with joy? That's true, Arnold?

...

RUBEK. (*evasively*) Not precisely in the centre. Unfortunately, I had to move the statue back somewhat. To improve the total composition, you understand. Otherwise, it would have been overtly dominant.

IRENE. But my face still shines with that luminous joy, like a revelation?

RUBEK. It still does, Irene. That is, to a degree. A bit toned down, perhaps. To fit in with the change in my outlook.

IRENE. (*standing up silently*) That composition expresses life as you now see it, Arnold?

RUBEK. Yes, I suppose it does. (Ibsen: 1072 - 1073)

During the process of modelling his ideal sculpture the sculptor Rubek had changed his view on what "The Resurrection Day" should be like. His own observation and reflection on the world had made him drop his ideals and to create a sculpture that dethroned them, that rejects a pedestal and accepts dirt, cracking earth, suffering faces and hidden bestiality. The single idealized body became a whole story – a conscious, awakened image of the real suffering that made people wish for a resurrection on the first place.

The transformation of "The Resurrection Day" as a sculpture reflects the awakening to reality, the rejection of heavenly ideals, the opening up towards pain. The Resurrection day as a motive connects to the title of the play - *When We Dead Awaken*, and the metaphor of resurrection as a state of awakening is crucial for this play. This play is about an awakening – an awakening towards the modern reality that did not reward idealism, nor found any beauty or truth in ideals. It is important to connect the day of resurrection to the Apocalypse, i.e., to a destruction of the old and coming of the new and pure. The prophecy for the day of resurrection is an offering for salvation and eternal life and an uncovering of the ultimate, transcendental truth. It is a promise only for the chosen ones, but an end in itself. The resurrection day means a transformation after which one will join the eternal beauties of heavenly life or remain to burn in hell forever.

The artist Rubek had lost his creative drive together with the loss of his model for the sculpture. His model for this sculpture, Irene, had been as romantically idealized as the image she was supposed to represent, and she and the artist Rubek had lived in an idealistic and inspiring platonic, but also torturing relationship, fantasizing over the high virtues and qualities of each other's idealized images. The

sculptor Rubek did not dare to touch Irene physically and spoil one of her idealized features during their contact as a model and artist. The model Irene was renouncing her sexual instincts and fell in love with the idealized creative power of the artist Rubek, devoting herself completely to fit the ideal he was projecting as an expectation on her. She left him after she had experienced the disappointment of the reality that uncovered itself - she had served her part as a model and was left to realize that she meant to him an episode in his life:

IRENE (*gazing mildly at him*). Can you remember a little word you said – when you were through – through with me and with our child. (*Nods to him.*) Can you recall that little world, Arnold?

...

IRENE You took both my hands in yours and pressed them warmly. And I stood there, breathlessly waiting. And then you said, “Thank you from the bottom of my heart, Irene. This,” you said, “has been an extraordinary episode for me.”

...

IRENE With that word, I left you. (Ibsen: 1074 - 1075)

Rubek’s reply to her explanation of why she left is a vague excuse that the word “episode” is not his usual choice, and that: “Oh well-when you come right down to it, after all, it was an episode. (...) You take everything too much at heart, Irene.” (Ibsen: 1075) While it seems that Irene herself and her hurt feelings are not worthy of a discussion for him, he is very eager to explain what the sculpture of Irene means to him and how he relates to her new position in “The Resurrection Day.” Rubek is completely possessed by the modernist attitude of reflecting on how things, people and events touch, move, or affect him, but he is still not letting go of the idealized image of himself as an artist. He builds a distance towards all people that do not respond to his idealized self in the way he expects them to, and it seems as if the only person in the world that might unlock his “little, tiny casket with a cunning look” in which “all [his] visions lie stored away” is Irene because “she had the key – and she took it with her. ...And the years pass! And [he] can’t get that treasure.” (Ibsen: 1065).

He seems to be persuaded that the world, his wife Maja, even Irene can never completely understand him, and after articulating his own sad being in the sculpture had left himself with nothing else to say. In the conversation with his wife Maja where he explains to her that he is bored and unsatisfied with his life with her, Rubek explains that he sees himself as “the one, and no one else, who’s undergone another transformation – an awakening to what [his] life really is,” and that therefore he

cannot continue to live with her, since she has not experienced the same kind of transformation. (Ibsen: 1065) However, when he sees Irene after a long time, he sees her as “the living image of Resurrection” (Ibsen: 1066) and “transfigured.” (Ibsen: 1068) Irene herself insists that she had only “[r]isen from death.” (1068) Many years after their last meeting and their ‘artist-model episode,’ Rubek tries again to re-establish an ideal relationship with her by persuading her that “there’ll be the light of a new dawn for both of [them].” (Ibsen: 1068) This time only, they should be in a different relation, a relation of idealized lovers.

Rubek sees himself as transformed, as awakened to what his life really is, but he holds to the narcissistic idealized thought that he is the only one that had the special ability and the special artistic nature to do this. He is not letting go of the romantic ideal of the artist although he had realized how deluded his idealism was. At the same time, he had to attribute the same transformation to Irene, so that she can be his companion, forgive him, she can justify his behaviour in his own eyes, and later on help him to continue to live in the light of the new dawn as a chosen one. It is interesting nevertheless that for him she is “transfigured,” while he himself is “transformed.” This labelling points to his objectification of Irene, his focusing on her figure and her posture, but not on her as an equal being. His affection towards her ends with the beginning of his own need, and she is merely a tool for his transformation to happen once again, a carrier of the key to his creative casket, but not a *real* partner in life and an *equal* partner in a relationship.

RUBEK. (*ardently, pulling off his hat and mopping his forehead*). Yes, but listen now, how I’ve introduced myself in the composition. In front, by a spring – it could be here – a man sits bowed down by guilt, as if he can’t quite detach himself from the earth’s crust. I call him remorse for a lapsed life. He sits there and dips his fingers in the flowing water – to rinse them clean – and he’s wrung and harrowed by the thought that he’ll never, never succeed. In all eternity he’ll never be free to experience resurrection. He’ll sit there perpetually in his own hell.

IRENE. (*cold and harsh*) Poet!

RUBEK. Why poet?

IRENE. Because you’re soft and lazy and full of self-forgiveness for every sin of your life, the acts you’ve done and the thoughts you’ve had. You killed my soul – and then you model yourself in remorse and penance and contrition (*Smiles.*) – and you think that settles the score. (Ibsen: 1073)

It is very peculiar how Rubek first wants to explain how he introduced himself into the sculpture, but later on speaks of sculpting a man, and he speaks of this man as if it is someone else. It is as if his transformation is beyond what is represented in this sculpture, as if by objectifying himself and his own remorse for his lapsed life he has

transcended this situation and is out of it. He is beyond expression and cannot articulate himself in regards to other people, guarded with the attitude derived from his artistry. Irene's reaction to his narcissistic cleaning of his own consciousness is justified – by objectifying the guilt he felt for her he is persuaded that this guilt will disappear. He even verbally expresses the weight on his consciousness he feels for Irene having “a shadow that tortures [her],” (Ibsen: 1069), but he never apologizes. He only refers to the lack of inspiration he experienced after she had left, he is only reflecting on what the situation from the past means to himself. He is accusing Irene of “[l]aying waste to [his] life” and destroying his artistic drive. He insists that he experiences a transformation, but he never verbally expresses what exactly his transformation is and what the awakening to his life is. He had felt that there was a mistake in his idealized existence, so he changed the sculpture, but he never managed to apply his new understanding to life. His existence in the world remained the same – he continued being an artist and he again pursued a young woman in an expectation that she would lead him to inspiration – fortunately for her, the young and practical Maja did not hold up to feed his narcissistic idealism. The whole concept of this transformation is elevated, and it puts him on a pedestal, while the truth about his sadness, remorse and disability to clean his self from illusion remains locked in the sculpture. Arnold Rubek is a man in between two epochs, an artist between ideals, a muted, objectified subject and a melancholic cynic. His first awakening, the one that occurred when he changed the sculpture is not from the dead, but to the dead, to the voiceless.

At the very opening of *When We Dead Awaken* there is an allegorical discussion on the ‘sound of silence’ and whether a person can hear the silence which is everywhere in Norway, “...everywhere here in this country.” (Ibsen: 1032) This silence overrules even the city, with all its noise and activity going in it. The mentioning of the silence, as well as its description as omnipresent evokes a feeling of devastation and death, as the very title of the play also suggests. This is not a soothing silence; it is a scary silence similar to the silence of death. “*But nevertheless – I felt that even that noise and activity had something dead about it*” – says Maja, the young wife of the artist Rubek (Ibsen: 1032), expressing the feelings of alienation and isolation of the modern human. Furthermore, this silence is emphasized by the cold and emotionless relationship she has to her self-absorbed, moody and silent husband.

This silence is completely personal, it exists within the one that cannot tune to the outside noise, the one that does not feel as if belonging.

After the conversation on the silence that overrules everything, these two characters start discussing their home, their own private dwelling. The ideal of the bourgeois home was constructing the home as a place that is supposed to make up for the strong feeling of alienation in the public outside. This home should be a return to one's privacy, one's security and sense of belonging. However, for these two characters such a home does not exist. Maja prefers to call their home only a house (Ibsen: 1032), showing how for her this physical space does not make up for the alienation and the distance between two people. Later in the play, she complains on Rubek's individuality and alienation, paradigmatic for the modern artist. She is described as in "*the full bloom of youth, with a vivacious expression and playful, teasing eyes, but with a trace of fatigue about her.*" (Ibsen: 1031) She seems to lack any kind of artistic ideals and is a typical modern young woman, oriented towards experience and reality. Unlike her husband, she is perfectly aware of who she is and what she represents to him.

MAJA (*somewhat depressed*). You're hardly a sociable person, Rubek. You'd rather go your own way and think your own thoughts. And you know I can't talk adequately with you about *your* concerns. About things like art and such. (*With a gesture of frustration.*) And, God knows, I care little enough about it! (Ibsen: 1061)

The ability that was perceived as typical for the artist in the modern times – the ability to reflect upon one's self – is demanding self control and a determination to always reflect upon one's self. This determination turns the person into a project; it destroys the spontaneous and natural reactions. With the coming of the modern times people had to learn to have a degree of self control that helped hide the natural confusion, weakness, or any personal attitude that collided with the generally and publicly approved showing of emotion. Society is restrictive and selective regarding display of emotions, and it sanctions unapproved behaviour. Jervis explains that self-understanding and understanding of the environment one belonged to in the age of modernity

is essential to expanding the arena of freedom. [...] to inhabit this reflexive mode is, again, to be fractured, to live the tension between project and experience, gaining partial resolution through a heightened self-awareness, but at a cost that can include a pervasive sense of exile, unreality or fragmentation. (Jervis 1998 : 10)

Jervis also states that the artists are the best examples for the modern attitude, since their reflexive mood as a typical ‘artistic’ feature is only emphasized by the reflexive mood that comes as a typical feature of modernity.

The meta-artistic aspect of *When We Dead Awaken*, as well as the subtitle *Epilogue*, point to the play’s enigmatic quality in regard to Ibsen’s complete oeuvre, especially his last prose plays. Thomas F. Van Laan (1994:81-88) investigated the references and elements in this play that refer to the previous plays, and interprets this as a deliberate message that points to Ibsen’s work as a totality, especially because it was written shortly after Ibsen had revised his complete dramatic work. In *When We Dead Awaken* Van Laan sees metaphors and allegories persistent in all of the dramatic works of Ibsen, the conflict between life and art being the most persistent one. The very ending of the last play, i.e., the very last writing of Ibsen can thus be interpreted as reconciliation and an ending of his interest in this topic. The utterance *Pax Vobiscum* from the very ending of the play can be understood as a metaphor for the artist’s peace, a resolution with a topic.

In his detailed biography of Ibsen, Michael Meyers shows how Ibsen himself rejected the common association of the subtitle *Epilogue* to the ending of his career as a writer. Instead, what Ibsen wanted to indicate with this subtitle is an ending of a cycle which began “with *Doll’s House* and which now ends with *When We Dead Awaken*. ... It completes the cycle, and makes of it an entity, and now I am finished with it. If I write anything more, it will be in quite another context; perhaps, too, in another form.” (Ibsen in Meyers 1974 : 829) Meyers even suggests that *When We Dead Awaken* is Ibsen’s dramatized autobiography, since he found proofs that Ibsen “had been planning to write an autobiographical book which would relate his life to his work.” (Meyers 1974 : 830). Ironically, the *Epilogue* remained as the last written dramatic work by Ibsen.

I believe that the awareness of the performative qualities of life gained particular strength and meaning in the age of modernity due to the emerging enhanced self-reflection and the widening of the gap between public and private life. This awareness was an inevitable consequence, a reaction of the individual’s self to the increased demands of the public life. It shaped modernized society and brought ethic and aesthetic changes that led to high modernity and all the different modernisms – and consequently to postmodernity and postmodernism. Donald Preziosi (1999)

defines modernity as “the performance of the ethics and politics of identity, at every scale from the person to the race.” (33) The politics of identity served the forming of nations and the nation states, and it made clearer the difference between the individual self and the person identified with and belonging to a nation.

One of the significant emerging phenomena in the 19th century was the massive appearance of museums and the development of art history. These two interrelated occurrences: the scientific, systematic approach (art history) and the collecting, performing institution (the museum) served the strengthening of national feelings, and consequently, the forming of a person’s identity. The art objects and the other artefacts in museums served as controlled, objectified, even moral lessons – they were an indication of a past that was gone and over. Museums and art history served the development of awareness for the difference between cultures and societies, of otherness, and they often employed “spectacle, stagecraft, and dramaturgy” in order to show the relations of the exhibited objects to the world, the relation among the separate exhibited objects and, perhaps most importantly, to initiate a reflective reaction in the individual. (Preziosi 1999 : 31) Showing the history of the world and its development, the art objects in museums served as an exposition of “the hidden truth of the citizen, the modern individual subject.” (Preziosi 1999 : 33) Art history developed from the impulse of modernity to mark and *in an act of confirmation perform its existence* as separate from everything that had happened before – the past and art belonged to museums.

What art represented for the creator/artist, how the world or the relation of an individual to the world was represented through art became a source for reflection for the one observing. The works of art were looked upon as openings to the creator’s soul, and their interpretation began to be the subject of psychoanalysis. This is why Preziosi sees art history as a bridge between psychoanalysis and history, serving the purpose of clarifying the line between the individual and society. The development of art history and museums became one of the tools for performing modernity. Through them the modern individual knowingly and scientifically separated himself from the past. The artefacts and their history also served another very important function: to initiate a reflective process, that ultimately leads to self-reflection. They were, and still are a corrective performance. Aesthetic modernism is a consequence and a reaction to the development of art history, since it decided to cut itself away from history and old

ideologies and to form itself according to a new one: denying a reference point in the past, but strongly rooted in self-reflexivity.

Karin Sanders points to the use of archaeology and archeological terms in Ibsen's works as a "psychological trope [that] has been wedded to a cultural and material component. ... a model of digging, which connects past and present in an ongoing interpretative gesture." (Sanders 2002 : 107) The various archeological artefacts in the plays of Ibsen (Sanders analyses *The Burial Mound*, *John Gabriel Borkman* and *The Masterbuilder*) work as materialised metaphors, as guides to the fossils of the past. Sanders lucidly points to the use of archeological terms in psychoanalyses, especially in Freud. She is inclined to see the real value of these metaphoric uses in their ability to construct and interpret the past while at the same time we are acknowledging that "interpretation both imagines and creates new material." (Sanders 2002 : 100) In such a way, artefacts serve the performance of a constructed past and become substance for constructing a (hi)story that is already aware of itself as history. In other words, artefacts serve the rehearsing of history, its performance in order to confirm the present.

In *When We Dead Awaken* the artefact is not an archaeological, but an art object. Both the development of art history and archaeology serve the same purpose, since they are both sciences connected to the appearance of museums and forming of nations. In fact, they are both history: one is a history of aesthetic ideas and their products, while the other is a history of cultures before those cultures employed the use of letters and writing.

Jette Jundbo Levy reads the sculpture "The Resurrection Day" as ekphrasis, "a text that is describing a visual art-work, a text that is getting some of its content and life from the art-work, but also bringing the artwork to life again." (Levy 1994 : 123) Ekphrasis was an ancient genre that was popular in romanticism, and most probably the most famous example of ekphrasis is Shelley's "Ode to a Grecian Urn." The meaning of the sculpture, of this particular ekphrasis, is compressed in its name, "The Resurrection Day," and connected to Christian tradition and the renaissance. Levy reads the transformation of the sculpture as a transformation from life to death, from a mixture of earth and water to stone, from clay and content to marble and vessel. The reason for the transformation she finds in Rubek's scepticism towards sincerity and innocence. Rubek would not touch Irene so that he would not become impure, so that he could preserve his ideal, and in the clerical tradition, innocence is

connected mostly to sexual innocence. Irene was hoping for a materialization of her body that makes it eternal, un-aging, preserved. In the hidden knife that Irene always has with her Levi finds the “mirror” for

the tool that is used to transform a living being into sculpture and artwork, which is the gaze of the artist. It's a gaze that is objective to a degree that also makes it both reifying and vulnerating to the woman, who is already showing her secret vulnerability by exposing her nakedness. (Levy 1994 : 127)

This gaze works as a tool that serves to disidentify the artist from the model and to force the model to immobility and silence, while the artist obtains an emotionless state, and it is exactly in the topic of this gaze that Jette Jundbo Levy finds the topic of the play: the medusa-like, deadening gaze of the artist that he cannot help himself to use while observing the world and his models, even up to the point that it “finally undermines the meaning and authority of art.”

Arnbjørn Jakobsen (1994) discusses biblical intertextuality in *When We Dead Awaken* mainly through the concept of resurrection, a concept that is consisted of climbing up, transfiguration and glorification. This dynamic concept allows to the ending of the play to be seen as an idea of resurrection in paradise, something that Charles W. Leland also observes. In the ending of the play and the climbing on the mountain Leland finds an affirmation of goodness and hope, since the two characters are blessed in the end, and since according to Christian thought, their death implies a new life in the heavens, a life of peace and glory, close to God. Leland also points to the meaning of “Irene”, which is *peace* in ancient Greek, as a confirmation of the affirmative and positive ending of this play, as a sign of rebirth. (Leland 1994 : 189)

Elinor Fuchs (2000) shows interest in Ibsen's apocalyptic visions and millennialism, and reads references to “The Book of Revelation” and “The Book of Daniel” in *When We Dead Awaken*.. She also connects Ibsen's taste for the apocalypse to the turn of the century and Ibsen's own statements about the new world and the new society that come with the modern times. She poses Ibsen to other writers of the period that were also very interested in the apocalyptic, like H.G. Wells, Strindberg, Alfred Jarry, Yeats, Artaud, Grotowski, Muller. The apocalyptic spirit is typical for periods of change, and the modernists had a special interest in it.

Jakobsen, on the other hand, finds biblical references, both textual and thematic, that overflow the play. He discusses and looks at the relationship of Irene and Rubek as an interaction of constant evoking biblical phrases, imagery and

motives, in which they interchange belief in each other and worship of each other. In the detailed analyses of the play that Jakobsen provides us with it is clear how they both imply and accept godly attributes, both to their own self and to one another, and how they use the sculpture as an imagined realization of these attributes. It is as if they perform, act out God in order to be closer to him. Jakobsen points to the possibility that the ending of the play maybe read as an “aspiration towards glory [...] superior to death,” but also as “religious madness,” while he himself is inclined to look at it as a story of “two human beings who abandon the ordinary world in order to seek a kind of mystical ecstatic communion. ...With the help of these biblical concepts, they create their own mythical reality.” (Jakobsen 1994 : 173) Thus, Jakobson confirms that the imagery of Resurrection, the sculpture as intertext and the biblical references in the play serve the purpose of constructing a reality, of creating a world-view. In fact, all of the mentioned biblical references work as intertexts that have a semantic focus in the sculpture as a carrier of the title “The Resurrection Day.”

Through the transformations of the sculpture and the description of its changes Rubek is constructing his own self, he is performing his own (hi)story. Before it went into a museum, “The Ressurrection Day” was a flexible stage on which the past of Arnold Rubek and his idealizations were acted out. While it was clay the sculpture could have been modelled and remodelled, it was earth and water, a kind of aliveness. Once it became a masterpiece carved in marble, an established art object, it became a stage for performing history of the public, of art, aesthetics and nations – it became stoned, dead, placed in a museum. The sculpture is also a double confirmation of the changes in the attitude towards the aesthetic object that happened in modernity: it is in itself a representation of self-reflexivity – it represents a man who is in remorse and reflecting on his lapsed life, and it also represents an end of the world, it reflects a need to erase history and start again completely new.

Items in museums are specimens, representatives of line of objects, resembling items that are important in the forming of a nation, an aesthetic movement, or are exemplary for a specific period. Ibsen’s description of the sculpture as an artist that is absorbed in his own reflexive thoughts during a cataclysmal situation speaks of the power of isolation and self-centeredness that self-reflexivity has. The fact that in his play he put it in a museum and labelled it a masterpiece confirms the sculpture as an artefact, as an object of the past. The fact that we never see the sculpture on stage, or read about it through a description given by the other characters makes it a ‘particular

game-field,' a working, performing allegory that is different for both Irene and Rubek. While Irene calls the sculpture her child, thus alluding to the idealists' artist as a channel of divine creative powers and to the sculpture as holding transformational life-energy, Rubek lets it be permanently placed in a great museum far, far away, as in *a cemetery*. (Ibsen : 1071) Irene wants "to make a pilgrimage to the spot where [her] soul and the child of [her] soul lade buried," (Ibsen : 1071) thus confirming that by being put in a museum, the statue is now just a lifeless artefact in line of others, it became history. The sculpture mediates between life and death for the two characters, and the imagery of the day of resurrection it contains is also evoking the same tension. Just like the two characters when they meet, it is both dead and alive: in a museum, in a cemetery, it is preserved, yet dead forever, while as active memory, while being seen and interpreted by everyone – it is alive.

The sculpture works as a metaphor of transformation, since itself it has been transformed, and since it is the reason for Irene's transformation into a dead, soulless person. The sculpture is also responsible for Rubek's spiritual death (although it is Irene that sees him as a dead person), or at least for the death of his artistic drive. In the play we see how the sculpture and the pair Rubek – Irene mutually and interactively go through transformations: the transformation of Irene's body into clay, the spiritual death of Irene and "the disappearance of her soul" because of this transformation, the transformation of the sculpture into the second version, Rubek's transformation reflected in the change, the placing of the sculpture in a museum and its transformation into an artefact, Rubek's inner transformation into an awakening about what life really is and his turn to everyday life, Irene's return in the image of a statue (another transformation), their mutual transformation into life and at the end, the ending transformation into their death. Rubek is insisting on seeing transformation and transfiguration in everything, while Irene is obsessed by death. She is the one that sees them both as dead, as people that have never lived, and her very appearance is the reason for the unravelling of the plot of the play that ends with death, while Rubek sees her transfigured and insists that he, himself and no one else experienced a transformation, an awakening to what life really is.

In *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Kenneth Burke shows how the images of life and death are the most commonly used images to imply transformation, "with its variants of being born, being reborn, dying, killing, and being killed." (Burke 1969 : 12) Burke believes that the psychic structure of men is based around processes of identification

and transformation, and that the psychoanalytic concept of the “drive to kill” should actually be translated into a “desire to transform the principle” which another person represents. (Burke 1969 : 13) The need to emphasize the ending and the beginning of something is actually a consequence of the effort to temporize the essence of things, a logical effort to understand the incomprehensible.

[T]he *logical* idea of a thing's essence can be translated into a temporal or narrative equivalent by statement in terms of the thing's source or beginnings (as feudal thinking characterized a person's individual identity in terms that identified him with his family, the paradoxical ultimate of such a situation being perhaps the use of “bastard” as epithet to describe a man's *character*).” But if there is this ultimate of beginnings, whereby theological or metaphysical systems may state the essence of mankind in terms of a divine parenthood or an originating natural ground, there is also an ultimate of endings, whereby the essence of a thing can be defined narratively in terms of its fulfilment or fruition. Thus, you state a man's timeless essence in temporal terms if, instead of calling him “by nature a criminal,” you say “he will end on the gallows. (Burke 1969 : 13)

Burke's simple understanding of the effort to understand essence as an exposure of the beginning and the end proves very important and enlightening when applied to *When We Dead Awaken* and modernity in general. Through the reading of the story of Irene and Rubek that ends with their death and starts with the romanticised idea about “The Resurrection Day,” what is actually being translated to the readers and the audience is the motive of the ideal art and the idealised artist as tragic. Burke connects Aristotle's idea of entelechy, i.e., the state of perfection, the finishedness of which something is capable to the idea of understanding the essence of that thing. If this thing, or motive represented in a play is of tragic nature, than it will be connected with an ending that implies a sort of death. In *When We Dead Awaken* we see both Rubek and Irene die, hand in hand, blinded by their ideal and their romanticised view of themselves. Thus, what is also implied through the deaths of the two characters is the tragic outcome of romanticised, performed, unnatural, uncorporeal love. The motive of the sculpture is very complex in its connection to the finished platonic love story between Rubek and Irene, as well as in its connection to performing art history and modernity. Rubek was right to call the creative phase he had with Irene an “episode.” He saw the end of a story, his work motivated by Irene finished. He saw Irene transfigured. The effort to sculpt Irene's body in a sculpture corresponds to an effort of preserving that body from dying, an effort to keep it forever.

However, to Irene the word episode sounded like the ending of their story, like death, and so she felt that Rubek took her soul with this act, since what she lived for was the performing of their idealized story. As an ending of their idealized love, she

then decided to leave Rubek in hope that he would not be able to create more, in hope that she would kill his creative drive, his principle. She succeeded in doing this, but then he transformed his principle, and with that he transformed the sculpture from the idealised depiction into another view of remorse. Obsessed by death, i.e., by the ending of their story Irene appears once more in Rubek's life and reminds him of their history, re-evoking the same motive that she so much wanted dead. In fact, Irene is performing death up to the point that she becomes death, killing her two husbands, always carrying a deadly weapon with her. She would have killed the sculpture, 'their child,' but that would mean killing her own eternal image.

When she meets Rubek, she is on her way to see this image in a museum, where it stays preserved forever. She gets disappointed though, since Rubek has changed this image in correspondence with his new motive and principle. She would like to kill Rubek because of this, but she seems to finally understand that there is no need to kill, since there was no real story to finish anyway. The potential of their love was never accomplished, and the entelechy of their relationship is nothing else but tragic and like a dead seed. That is why she does not kill Rubek and tells him that he is already dead as well. Irene does not see life because she cannot see the beginning of love. In the ending scene of *When We Dead Awaken* she refers to the world as "embalmed before her," and to herself as a "young woman risen from the dead" that sees both Rubek and the world dead just as when they were when she was lying (Ibsen: 1091) Irene's fear of death has made her obsessed with death, and she is repeating death, re-acting and performing death constantly. She even has a Nun always following her, a clear sign of death around her like a shadow. Irene is not like a real character, since she functions more like a body, like an automaton. Ibsen never lets us divide her from "The Resurrection Day" – her posture is a performing of the sculpture, she is like a shell of a person, risen, resurrected, but dead somehow. She is like a story that wants to be told, but cannot be heard, like a history that could have, but didn't happen. And this is her strongest connection with romanticism. Irene matches the gothic image of the dead bride.

Performing modernity was performing history and identity, a process of constant identification in order to respond to reality and shape identity through noticing differences in the present. As Burke remarks, in feudal times the identification happened on the level of the family. In modernity it transformed to the level of the nation, and museums, art history and archaeology served the purpose of

strengthening the identification of the individuals with the beginning of the story of that nation in an effort to temporize and materialize, act out, perform its essence. In the aesthetic realms of romanticism, the deterministic identification was with God himself. Therefore the romanticist ideal was impossible, doomed and parodied by the pragmatic motives and principles of modern times. Nietzsche was right: God is dead, welcome modernity. In *When We Dead Awaken*, through the death of the two self-idealised characters Ibsen is telling us the same.

Another pointing to the performative character of the modernist identity are the architectural spaces in *When We Dead Awaken*. The characters of the play live temporarily in a hotel when they meet, but the setting of the whole play is outside, in an open space. The presence of homes and houses is abstract in this play that is unique in its dealing with the topic of the home from a modernist perspective. The play displays the loss of the ideal of the home in modernity and the new feelings of lack and insufficiency connected to what was once a place for intimacy and security. Mark B. Sandberg connects the loss of the ideal of the home in the late 19th century with the fashionable appearance of the folkmuseum homes in 19th century Norway. These folkmuseum homes were houses that were transferred piece by piece from the country side and rebuilt in the cities so that people could observe and admire them as a thing from the past, as something other to what they were usually accustomed to.

The new homes of the modern citizens, although inhabited, were haunted by feelings of inauthenticity, defamiliarization and emotional detachment. The old displayed homes, although dead and turned into artefacts in which no one lived, were more alive because they were felt as warmer and more comfortable than the homes people actually lived in, they were reminders of the lost and romanticised ideal of the home. Re-placing a home to a museum-marked space was a clear sign that the homes on display became artefacts from the past, and that “they were preserved and embalmed as a kind of memorial to the time they were in use, a time that by definition is always already out of reach for the museum.” (Sandberg 2001 : 41) Sandberg reads *When We Dead Awaken* as a play with an architectural theme, introduced through the problematic relations of its “unhoused” characters. I would argue that this theme of the home and the house is also a cultural, political and performative theme, since private homes reflect fashions, they are signs of status and position, and they imply the nature of intimate behaviour. The difference of the modern home in relation to the

past is not in the space, but in the essence, in the ideal and the performance of that ideal connected to the home.

Arnold Rubek would like to live a life in light and flesh in the new home in the city and the villa at Lake Taunitz he had built for himself and his young wife Maja, while she refuses to even think of their house a home. (Ibsen : 1032 - 1033) She is aware that their home is not a home, but just a dwelling place, a substitution for a home, because it lacks the feeling of a home. The house-museums were staged so that the feeling of 'hominess' in them was dominant and real, natural. This was a feeling that needed to be preserved because it was under the threat from the coming modern times. The old cottage on Lake Taunitz that Rubek and Irene visited was more like the museum-homes, small, comfortable and intimate, connected to tradition and security. Rubek destroyed it and built an exclusive modern villa for him and his new wife in what can be interpreted as a metaphoric act of liberation from the past, as an effort to cut the connection with the romanticised past. He and Maja lived in the new spacious house isolated, silently, not communicating with each other, and their constant travelling reveals a need to run away from that kind of a home. Rubek emphasizes the economic aspect of the homes he provided Maja with, homes that are spacious and in a "more elevated style." (Ibsen: 1033) When he finished his masterpiece that was placed in a museum he could afford to live in this kind of style, but it is exactly this style that prevents from contact and intimacy.

The political aspects of his statement lie in the fact that in order to be with a woman, he has to offer her a home, and the size and the shape of that home are determined by his social and economic position. However, he is unable to offer the sense of security and intimacy in a home. This feeling of emptiness and silence that emanates from the mentioning of the home connects to not having a successful and happy private life. Personally, the famous and celebrated Rubek is a wreck. Ulfhejm also offers a castle to Maja, only one with large hunting grounds around it and without any works of art. (Ibsen: 1086) Maja associates the works of art with death, with a dark and dank cage with no fresh air. That is why she happily concludes that a home without art is suitable for her.

Modernity is also characterised by constant, active and adaptive performance of its position in relation to history and to all that can be labelled as other (to an individual, to a nation, to a culture, to a gender, to a race, etc.). This is how modernity directs the formation of identity – through its constant performing, through its

constant re-iteration. The modern times brought changes that fast forwarded and underlined the already existing awareness of the performative qualities of life. Plato's concept of the world as a reflection of ideas, Aristotle's concept of mimesis, the Latin idea of *teatrum mundi*, Shakespeare's famous quote that all the World is a stage, the Eastern concepts of the illusionist nature of reality, as well as almost all of the ancient forms of ritual and theatre – all these are connections of life to performances, games, imitation and reflection. The firm structures of society and culture were established by performing modern times and modern values in relation to past life and values, public life in relation to the private, space in relation to its essence and function, etc. The awareness for these processes which was initial in the age of modernity, by the end of the 20th century resulted with the appearance of the field of performance studies that covers anthropological, sociological, psychological, theatrological, culturological, aesthetic, philosophical, linguistic, literary etc. research.

I believe that Ibsen's works are a reflection and a result of the arising awareness of performativity in the age of modernity and that this awareness is present in them as one of the dominant topics. The metaphor of *A Doll's House* is speaking for itself (people are like dolls, puppets in a decorated home playing out an ideal of life instead of living reality), as much as the loft from *The Wild Duck* (which can be perceived as a metaphor for the illusions in people's lives about their own freedom of thought, behaviour and choice), the ending massive scene of *Pillars of Society* (where with a very subtle irony Ibsen points to the acted out scenarios and the fake rhetoric of powerful and influential people), Hedda Gabler's attempt to create a scenario for her ideal of the beautiful death, Hilda Wangel's re-creating the scene of her childhood in which Sollness loses his life – all these are vivid elements that point to Ibsen's awareness of the importance and variations of performances in life.

In his last play he introduces “the device of the sequential pastime and game in order to structure and give definition to the lives of his characters whose histories and motives are, at best, vague and contradictory. He, therefore, achieves in 1899 a remarkable modernism.” (Barranger 1998 : 58) The uniqueness of this play in comparison to the previous others is not in the fact that it structures around illusions and game-like mimetic behaviour, since there are other plays that are structured around illusion and deceitful actions, but in the manner in which the characters use these illusions in order to *construct* their own reality, the relations to each other and their own ideas of time and being. Barranger sees in this “a significant new approach

to the problem of overcoming the limitations of representational theatre,” i.e., new ways of using realist presentation and realist methods for representing layered, psychic and deep personal issues. (Barranger 1998 : 58) In this uncovering of the constructs of personal reality I see the seed of the awareness of performance in life, since such a constructed reality must be performed in order to be maintained. In the 19th century, this awareness was especially focused on uncovering the falseness of human relations and the falseness of public life, as Nancy Morrow shows in *Dreadful Games* (1988). She exposes the metaphor of the game to be one of the most significant metaphors in 19th century realist novels, and she shows that the language of games was used widely in order to describe society and social relations in prose works of the period. (Morrow 1988 : 3)

Ibsen exploits the discourse of games and game-like structures in *When We Dead Awaken* in abundance. But he also reveals another truth about social relations, in a very different way than in the realist novels of the 19th century, or the realist plays of the period. He is closer to the techniques and the motives of prose novels in his earlier prose plays, such as *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll's House*, or *Enemy of the People*. But with *Ghosts* he began to go deeper into the problem of constructing reality on the level of identity, on the level of the psyche, the imaginary. While the prose realists were (mainly) showing the true nature of relations by uncovering the “dirty” power games of society and authority, Ibsen transcends this by focusing on what these games are really a consequence of. Society and human relations are based on performed game-like acts that establish the individual towards all that is Other (spouses, friends and lovers, people in public life), just like modernity was establishing itself in relations to all that is Other. Behind the polished surface of civil capitalist society lies a complex, unfair and very often rough ethic network of pragmatic-oriented rules and relations that have a devastating and alienating effect on the psychic life.

Theatre in Ibsen's time began showing realistic spectacles so that the individual could reflect upon them as if they were a part of reality. The individual's life became a set of behaviours and performances, and the stage became a reflection of real life. What these realist presentations were showing is that these games and acted out performances in society destroy love and relations and that they are deadly if they penetrate one's private life and the home. What Ibsen's specific realism is showing us is that one of the biggest problems of the modern individual is that he

cannot be absorbed in and enjoy the everyday, since modernity requires constant performing on so many levels. A lot (if not all) of the private life is also performed, but the mere performing of these roles does not lead to happiness. Ibsen was for the everyday, or at least he was very interested in the everyday, since all of his modern prose plays are reflections of the bourgeois every day reality.

Even *When We Dead Awaken* is a reflection of the bourgeois reality, as much as it is different from all the other plays and as much as it is not located in a domestic setting. The bourgeois' escape place from public life has proven to be a lie. The home was not what it was presented to be. As Ibsen had started showing, and as many of the postmodern theorists have shown, private life is also political and constructed around learned performances. Our very identities are always political and determined by the public. What his specific proto-modernism is showing us is that performing ideals, especially aesthetic ideals, cannot substitute real life and any attempt to do so leads to a (kind of) death.

Arnold Rubek is unable to form relations that are both harmonious and real. When relationships are harmonious for him, it is because they fit into his perfect idealized image of what they should be like, i.e., when they are performed properly according to an ideal scenario that he envisaged. When they are real they are cynical and power – based. He is always filling and replacing reality with museum-like, mimetic objects that represent his idealized visions. He substituted the life with Irene that he lost with a life with his young wife Maja, he substituted the old cottage on Lake Taunitz with an exclusive villa. After Irene re-appeared in his life, he immediately re-substituted the vivacious Maja with the pale and statue-like Irene. By marrying Maja and buying two homes, he attempted to perform a bourgeois wealthy person, imitating and acting out what was the reality, the everyday of the 19th century wealthy person. However, he was not so successful in his performance of the bourgeois because he couldn't leave the artist behind, and just like his portraits, he is grotesque in the role. These are portraits of "the virtuous rich" that "pay... in good faith – and through the nose, too..." (Ibsen :1036) Rubek obviously despises the rich who admire his art and who had provided him with the position of the renowned artist. At times he manifests pride for his position and does not mind emphasizing his wealth in front of the public, or his young wife Maja and the hunter Ulfhejm.

ULFHEJM. (*glowers at them for a moment, then raises his hat*). Well, strike me dead! What's a country boy doing in this high-toned society?

RUBEK. (*glancing up*). And what does that mean, Mr. Ulfhejm?

ULFHEJM. (*more subdued, minding his manners*). Looks like I've run in with the great sculptor Rubek himself.

RUBEK. (*nods*). We met once or twice socially, the autumn of my last visit home.

ULFHEJM. Well, but that was many years ago, and in those days you weren't the famous name I hear you've become now. Back then even a scruffy bear-hunter could approach you. (Ibsen : 1043)

However, according to what fits best the situation, sometimes he acts out a rich bourgeois, and sometimes he acts out romanticised legends.

RUBEK. (*defiantly*). I am an artist, Irene. And I'm not ashamed of the human frailties I might carry around with me. Because, you see, I was *born* to be an artist. And no matter what, I'll never be anything else. (Ibsen : 1074)

...

MAJA (*with a faintly scornful laugh*). You're always the artist, aren't you?

RUBEK. I certainly hope so. (Ibsen : 1058)

Rubek stopped being *an artist* in the romanticist's idealised sense after he finished his masterpiece. He decided to become a bourgeois artist, and therefore he fit his lifestyle to resemble one. When he was young and idealistic, he had the woman he aesthetically adored, Irene, close to him, although he could not offer her money and a comfortable home. All the luxury he could offer was a stay in an old villa that he didn't own and a game they were playing there every Saturday afternoon. However, as soon as he was done with her as a model, i.e., as soon as she had left him, he replaced her with a sensuous wife and a spacious home. His new wife is without the ability to see the same ideals and the glories of the world that the previous woman of his life could see in him. His young wife Maja is very skilled in playing the everyday, reality based games, but she is not so successful in playing the games that require imitating and following ideals. That is why he is cynical and verbally revealing to her.

RUBEK. (*going on*). And became *Frau Professor* and the mistress of a beautiful home – excuse me – I should say, a most attractive house. And a villa on Lake Taunitz, where only the most fashionable people come. Yes, because I must admit, it's all very choice and inviting, Maja. And spacious, too. We don't always have to be right on top of each other –

MAJA. (*casually*) No, no – house room and such, we're not short of that –

RUBEK. So the fact is that, in general, you've been living in a more spacious and elevated style. In a more cultivated society than you were used to at home.

MAJA. Then you think *I'm* the one who's changed?

RUBEK. Yes, I think so, Maja. (Ibsen : 1033)

...

MAJA. (*heatedly, without moving*). But he's so ugly! (*Tears a tuft of heather out and throws it aside.*) So ugly! Ugly! Isch!

RUBEK. Is that why you are so eager to push off with him – into the primeval forests?

MAJA. (*brusquely*). I don't know. (*Turning towards him.*) You're ugly also, Rubek.

RUBEK. You're just discovering that?

MAJA. No, I saw it long ago.

RUBEK. (*shrugs*). People age, Maja. People age.

MAJA. That's not what I mean. No, there's something so weary, so defeated in your eyes – that is, whenever you are gracious enough to look at me – every once in a blue moon.

RUBEK. You think you can see all that?

MAJA. (*nods*) Little by little you've taken on this evil look in your eyes. It's almost as if you were dreaming up some insidious plot against me.

RUBEK. Really? (*In an amiable, yet serious tone.*) Come, sit here beside me, Maja. Then we can talk.

MAJA. (*raising herself halfway*). Would you let me sit on your knee, then? Like in those first years.

RUBEK. No, you mustn't. People can see us from the hotel. (*Moves a little*). But you can sit here on the bench – next to me.

MAJA. No thanks. Then I'd rather go on lying right where I am. I can listen well enough from here... (Ibsen: 1058 - 1059)

Maja is the woman that reminds him of what he had become, and Irene is the woman that reminds him of what he believed he was. Although Maja is his wife, Rubek is afraid that the people of the hotel would see them sitting together. He is always insisting on his refined artistic nature and his position in society, but shows low morals and hypocritical behaviour, emphasizing his wealth and power over his wife. Although he holds fast to his own idealization, even Irene reminds him of his pragmatic character when she mentions that money is more than what she ever had with him (Ibsen: 1048) and that he “started looking around for other ideals” as soon as he was over with her. (Ibsen: 1052) “Art first – and than human life” – she quotes him, (Ibsen: 1052) aware that he is not able to live up to anything, not even the repetition of this idealized slogan. The romantic artist's ideals were to be taken seriously as a part of one's immanent self, and not to be questioned at all times, these unlimited concepts were ‘a part of one's nature.’ As Rubek himself states, according to these principles, one is born to be an artist, and cannot be anything else. Ideals could never be thought of as performed by the idealist: no self-awareness was possible, since they should come from a higher reality. They should overwhelm and possess. Arnold Rubek replaced these ideals with becoming a pragmatic bourgeois when he experienced a problem with his identity as an artist and, during his passage he created the different version of “The Resurrection Day”.

RUBEK. ...But I no longer loved my own work. All the bouquets and the incense just about turned my stomach and drove me out in despair to bury myself in the depths of the forest. (*Looks at her.*) You, being a mindreader, can you guess what occurred to me then?

MAJA (*casually*). Yes, it occurred to you to make portrait busts of ladies and gentleman.

RUBEK. (*nodding*). On commission, yes. With animal faces behind the masks. Those were a bonus, thrown into the bargain, you understand. (*Smiles.*) But that's not really what I meant.

MAJA. What, then?

RUBEK. (*again serious*). It was the fact that all the talk about the artist's high calling and the artist's mission, and so on, began to strike me as basically empty and hollow and meaningless.

MAJA. What would you put in its place?

RUBEK. Life, Maja.

MAJA. Life?

RUBEK. Isn't life in sunshine and beauty altogether more worthwhile than to work on till the end of your days in a damp, dripping hole, slaving yourself dead tired over lumps of clay and blocks of stone?

MAJA. (*with a faint sigh*). Yes, certainly that's what I always believed.

RUBEK. And then, at last, I'd become rich enough to live in luxury, in the lazy, shimmering sunlight. To build myself a villa on Lake Taunitz and a palatial town house in the capital, and all the rest of it.

MAJA (*picking up his tone*). And then, to top everything, you had the means to acquire me as well. And you allowed me to play with all your treasures.

RUBEK. (*joking to deflect her*). Well, didn't I promise to bring you up on a high mountain and show you all the glories of the world?

MAJA (*with a mild look*). You may have brought me up on a fairly high mountain, Rubek – but I don't see the glories of the world. (Ibsen: 1063-1064)

Maja, on the contrary, shows awareness for the performances in life and for every game she is playing, just like her hunting partner Ulfhejm also shows awareness of his own playful and performative actions. She accepts to play the game of the hunter and the hunted as she accepts to play the game of Rubek's wife. She describes both men as ugly, each in their own way. She is not attracted to them by idealistic love, nor because they are both very irresistible and charming men – she is attracted by the possibility to live her life with the thrill of their promises, while at the same time she'll be socially and financially secure. She imitates the 'supposed to be wife' Irene could have been as successfully as possible, and uses all the tricks she can in order to please Rubek. However, while doing this she has an aware distance. She is the one that breaks the illusion that their dwelling place is a home, and she is slowly leading Rubek to agree upon her liberation, but only after she found a substitute partner for herself and for him. Whenever the conversion between them strays too much, or there is a real threat on her position, she is the one that remains quiet and calm. Rubek does not display violence or any threat against her, and there is not a sign in the play that he has been mistreating her, although the difference in the age between the artist and his young wife is striking and implies a marriage without love. Maja displays a need for individual freedom and a mildly wild, child-like behaviour. She goes in the mountains with Ulfhejm freely, just by asking permission from Rubek, but she is always staying a bit on the side from both of them. She has awareness for every mistake she could be making and for all the risks she is taking. When Irene appears,

she does not show jealousy, but sees a way out of her situation. All of her actions are thought of consciously and she pursues them slowly and surely. She cautiously suggests to Rubek that they should separate, while also suggesting that she could still stay and use their house, and if that would not work, then she shows readiness to leave him completely.

MAJA. (*with an innocent look*). But, my dear – is it worth making all this fuss and bother over something that's really very simple?

RUBEK. You think it's simple?

MAJA. Why, of course. Just latch on to whomever you need most. (*Nods at him.*) I'll always know how to find a place for myself.

RUBEK. Where do you mean?

...

MAJA. Good Lord – if it doesn't work, than it doesn't. There's nothing gained by talking about it.

RUBEK. And what will we do, Maja, if it doesn't work?

MAJA. (*blithely*). Then the two of us would simply get out of each other's way. Split up. I can always find something new for myself in the world. Where I'll be free! Free! Don't worry on my account, Professor Rubek. (*Suddenly points of to the right.*) Look! There she is. (Ibsen: 1066)

She is also aware of Ulfhejm as a threat that can take away the freedom that she could have by liberating herself from the imprisonment of falsely and unsuccessfully playing and performing the everyday with Rubek, but at the end agrees to accompany him and be his partner in his castle surrounded by hunting grounds. Ulfhejm, like Maja, is also aware of the ugliness of the economic relations within society, even in the matters of the heart. He is separated from the rest of the world, hunting alone in the forests, accompanied by his servant and his dogs, far away from the hurt that has been done to him. In his first appearance in the play, we are introduced to the fact that he has no human friends, just his dogs, which is a clear sign of a past disappointment and scepticism in the human goodness. (Ibsen: 1045) He is more of a stoic than a sceptic though, ready to shoot his 'best friends' when they are ill or hurt, he is a tough, rough man with almost no manners, beastly and uncultivated, yet reasonable and intensely alive. His depiction is also idealised, it is close to an image of the noble savage, or a noble romantic hero ready to rescue ladies in danger.

The game he plays with Maja is a tricky one: he has to tempt her into the mountains where she'll feel insecure, and then he has to save her and take her down the path. Ulfhejm is the embodiment of the classical depiction of manhood. This picture is a bit ruined though, when in III Act he approaches Maja as a satyr, and later tells her the story of his disappointment in love. He is also a person that does not belong to the bourgeois everyday, a person that escapes the everyday, and from the

short introductory dialogue with Rubek and Maja, as well as from the way his behaviour is described, it is easy to conclude that he has no respect for the bourgeois lifestyle, although he obviously is wealthy. He is like a remnant of an old noble line marked by ethic codes, a positive image of the lonely knight who follows his own way. He could almost be perceived as ridiculous, or he could be perceived as ascetic (if it wasn't for his sensual pursuits), but the very fascinating thing about this character is his honesty – he does not pretend to be good.

His game is playing sports – and he is constantly exhilarated by the thrill of his playful actions. All the time he is playing, he seems pushy and intense, repulsive... He even threatens to physically overtake Maja. However, in the dialogue between him and Maja in the III Act, (Ibsen: 1085 - 1087) Ulfhejm displays a very rational and reasonable, every-day view of what a marriage, or at least a bond between two people should be like. This is a scene that is parallel to the ending scene between Rubek and Irene, since in these two scenes all of the characters come to a sort of a reconciliation, they all confess what is hurting them and they all express their fears and views on love and life. Maja and Ulfhejm represent the life and future - oriented, reasonable part of the axes of life, love and death, while Irene and Rubek serve as the counterpart that feeds on ideals and past times, on the thought of death and of fear of death itself. Maja and Ulfhejm have a future in the bourgeois society, while Irene and Rubek belong to the past.

ULFHEJM. (*with an edge of resentment*). I once did that with a little hussy – picked her up out of the gutter and carried her in my arms. I handled her with kid gloves. I would have carried her that way all through life – so that her slender foot wouldn't be cut by any stone. Because the soles of her shoes were worn pretty thin when I found her.

MAJA. But still you picked her up and carried her like that?

ULFHEJM. Picked her up out of the filth and lifted her as high and tenderly as I could. (*With a rumbling laugh.*) And you know what thanks I got for that?

MAJA. No. What?

ULFHEJM. (*looks at her, smiles and nods*). I got these horns. The ones you can see so distinctly. Isn't that an amusing story, madam bear-slayer?

MAJA. Oh, yes, quite amusing. But I know another story that's even more amusing.

ULFHEJM. What's that?

MAJA. It goes like this. Once upon a time there was a stupid little girl, who had both a father and a mother. But they lived on very little money. Then, one day, a great and celebrated gentleman appeared in the midst of all this poverty. And he took the young maiden up in his arms – just like you – and journeyed far, far away with her.

ULFHEJM. Didn't she want to be wherever he was?

MAJA. Yes, because she was stupid, you see.

ULFHEJM. And I suppose he was a handsome specimen of manhood?

MAJA. Oh no, he wasn't especially handsome at all. But he fooled her into thinking that she'd go along with him up on top of the highest mountain, where there would always be light and sunshine.

ULFHEJM. So he was a mountain climber, that man?

MAJA. Yes, he was – in his way.

ULFHEJM. So he took the little girl up with him -?

MAJA. (*tossing her head*). Oh, I'll say – he took her, but not up! No, he duped her into a cold, dank cage, where there was neither sun nor fresh air – as it seemed to her, anyway – but only gilded walls, with great stone phantoms spaced around them.

ULFHEJM. Hang me, but it served her right!

MAJA. Yes, but it makes an even more amusing story, don't you think?

ULFHEJM. (*regarding her a moment*). Listen, my fine haunting friend –

MAJA. Well? What now?

ULFHEJM. Shouldn't you and I patch our rags and tatters together? (Ibsen : 1085)

Maja is using the performances she knows how to perform best in order to achieve her goals. And the way she does it is by performing the woman that the man who can offer her security needs. She adopts the language of hunting after just one day spent with Ulfhejm, informing Rubek that she's been "hunting for [him] everywhere," that she knows where to find bears and other prey, and that there are certain facts about bear hunting that everyone should know, thus playfully mocking at him, his age and his disability to be physically active. (Ibsen: 1057) She is also the one that slowly persuades Rubek to leave her, by mentioning and thinking over all the possible ways that it could be done. From the four characters of the play, Maja is the only one that is a complete depiction of the everyday, of the hard, money and survival oriented reality. However, she is not described as degenerated, destructive or dangerous. She is the real player of life in the play, pragmatic, but not evilly calculated, ironic, but not mean, truthful, but not desperate. She is not stuck to an ideal, but she is not unintelligent or dull – on the contrary, she is presented with a very lucid perception and a straight forward manner of expressing. She is curious, sensual, alive and young, genuine.

The play between the four characters of the play is constructed around their individual sense of reality, around their past experiences and their own performing of the roles that they have assigned for their selves in life or that life has assigned to them. Maja and Ulfhejm are like a complementary unit: she resembles his past hussy, he is the real man that Rubek is not. He could take her and carry her, but she has to promise that she will not leave him. There is no idealised love between them, it is not even sure if there is love. What is clear is that Ulfhejm has physical lust for Maja and that Maja agrees to be carried and protected by him. These two characters have no ideals for what they should perform as man and woman, because they have both experienced disappointment. Instead of high emotions comes logic: if the young, full blooded and vivacious Maja could stand a life with the soul-dead Rubek, a life with Ulfhejm would definitely be easier. If he could offer her security and a way out from

her imprisonment, than why not join him? Rubek and Irene, on the other hand, are always performing their own idealization and the idealization of their own relations, both among each other and regarding everything that is Other to them.

With the depiction of Ulfhejm, a positive aspect of romanticism is introduced, but one that was not in connection to the ideals about the artist and his nature. Ulfhejm is also old and belongs to the past, with his castle and his hunting grounds, but he is both like an aristocrat and a savage, he is alive and active, connected to the flesh and tradition. He is representing the pastoral, nature related aspect of romanticism, a Rousseau-ist ideal. Even Maja, with her youth, her sharpness and her thrill of nature and adventure fits into this image. It is the city life and the comforts that spoil her and make her cynical, and it was the need for survival that led her to Rubek and disappointment. Her new life and freedom, *their new life*, does not start in the city and the bourgeois domestic setting, but in nature, in the planes, while hunting.

4. The Consequences

In the 19th century, the bourgeois family was idealized and considered to be the central point for escaping the insecurities that capitalism brought. It was supposed to provide security, the moral standard for judging the public sphere, order, authority, security for material existence, etc... (Sennett 1977 : 20) It was the place where a man could realize 'his own nature', as opposite to the civility and the formal behaviour he had to perform in public. These "tensions between the claims of civility and the rights of nature, epitomized in the divide between public and private life in the cosmopolitan centre, not only suffused the high culture of the era but extended into more mundane realms." (Sennett 1977 : 19) The private home became 'an end in itself,' reflecting the need of the modern person to protect himself from the uncertainty and the arbitrariness of the public. Knowing oneself, being alone with one's self, the family and intimate friends had become also 'an end in itself.' However, this privatization of the psyche that first served as a necessary and natural protection is exactly the same reason that led to the heightened self-awareness of the modern person. As Sennett

clearly formulates it, "...the more privatized the psyche, the less it is stimulated, ...the more difficult it is for us to express feeling." (Sennett 1977 : 4)

In the works of Ibsen, the ideal of the family as providing security and protection is a persistent topic. From his last twelve plays only two are indicating towards a positive image of this ideal: *An Enemy of the People*, where the closest family is not the real issue, but is presented as supportive, and *The Lady from the Sea*, which differs from the other plays with the positive outcome of acceptance of the family as a place offering security, protection, reason and understanding. At the same time, this acceptance implies adopting and successfully performing the roles of a wife and a mother. *Pillars of Society* is a bit ambiguous in this respect, since the family members manage to resolve their issue, despite the secrets that were kept in the closet. However, the fact of the existence of these secrets and the need for their uncovering is spoiling the ideal of what the family is supposed to be from the very start. The underlying message seems to be that truth about the reality of family life is far from any kind of ideal.

Although *An Enemy of the People* and *The Lady from the Sea* seem to reflect a somewhat positive image of the family, there are indications of critical issues about the family ideal in these two plays as well. The ambiguous position of Ellida Wangel at the time before and during her marriage, her apparent youth and innocence, the way she is perceived and judged by others, i.e. society, and the relationship of her two step-daughters to her and to their own suitors is calling for a re-thinking of the ideal of the family based on love and support. In *An Enemy of the People*, the relationship between the Stockman brothers is indicative of, again, decay among family relations, and the play is actually permeated by a subtle, but constant threat of the corrupted society on the private family unit and the relationship between the two brothers. In all the other plays, the family and the home are portrayed as decaying or already decayed. Society penetrates the family on many levels, and it is this influence that destroys the ideal of the family.

In *When We Dead Awaken* Ibsen apparently leaves the bourgeois home and the ideal of the family, and at its opening the play introduces a conversation in which the married couple Rubek-Maja reveals that they are unable to even think of their house as a home, not to say of each other as a family. (Ibsen: 1032) This play has an atypical setting – unlike most of his plays, it is not staged in a bourgeois house and it does not seem to touch issues about society and the family. In fact, the scenes of the

play are all acted outside, in nature, although the presence of the spa hotel is clearly indicated. M.S. Barranger (1998) reads the open spaces of Ibsen's last play as a symbolic indication of the characters' need for achieving a balance with the natural, essential and immanently ethic part of their beings, opposite the social, artificial and aesthetic. The expansion of the dramatic setting from a single room to a vast space in nature is a sign of the ambitious efforts of the characters to understand the patterns, the sources and the solution for their painful existence.

When We Dead Awaken opens outside a watering place on the Norwegian coast and moves into the mountains where Rubek and Irene, awakened to the wrongful patterns of their lives, die in a purifying avalanche. They are the resurrected of the play's title along with Maja, Rubek's young wife, and Ulfhejm, a country squire, who likewise are reawakened to the potential of their lives." (Barranger 1998 : 57)

The characters in this play are far from indulging in a family ideal - they all have been disappointed by love and promises for happiness.

Instead, what is offered in this play is the idea of marriage as an agreement based on common reason, a sort of a verbal contract between two people that have already experienced the disillusionment about the real bases of married life. This is the attitude presented through the par Maja-Ulfhejm and their relationship, as a striking opposition to the idealistic couple Irene-Rubek and their relationship.

ULFHEJM. Shouldn't you and I patch our rags and tatters together?
MAJA. Is milord setting up as a quilt-maker?
ULFHEJM. Yes, I think he is. Couldn't the two of us stitch the pieces together here and there - and make something in the shape of a human life out of them?
MAJA. And when those poor scraps wear out completely - what then?
ULFHEJM. (*with a sweeping gesture*). Then we'll stand there, free and easy- exactly as nature made us.
MAJA. You with your goat legs, yes!
ULFHEJM. And you with your-well, enough said.
...
ULFHEJM. I have a castle to offer you -
MAJA. (pointing to the hut). A mate to that one?
ULFHEJM. Mine hasn't fallen apart yet.
MAJA. And all the glory of the world, too?
ULFHEJM. One castle, I said -
MAJA. Thanks! I've had my fill of castles.
ULFHEJM. With magnificent hunting grounds stretching for miles around.
MAJA. Are there any works of art in your castle?
ULFHEJM. No - actually, there are no works of art, but -
MAJA. (relieved) Well that's good news!
ULFHEJM. Will you go with me then - for as far and as long I want?
MAJA. There's a tame bird of prey keeping watch on me.
ULFHEJM. (wildly). We'll let him have a bullet in his wing, Maja!
MAJA. (*looks at him a moment, then says decisively*). Then carry me down through the depths. (Ibsen: 1085-1087)

After rejecting the promise of a castle and reassuring herself that she is not promised all the glory of the world, after inquiring if she will be surrounded by works of art and expressing her fear about being constantly observed by a “tame bird of pray,” and finally, after becoming secure that this bird of pray will be eliminated in case he appears, Maja finally agrees to Ulfhejm’s proposal. “Then carry me down through the depths” she says to the man who agreed to take away her concerns. These concerns are a consequence of her prior experience in marriage with Rubek, who failed to fulfil his promises. Although she had once been disappointed by promises, she accepts new ones. She had been promised to be taken up to the mountain peaks and to see all the glory of the world, but this never happened in her marriage with the artist. However, it is unclear if she falls into another trap: her new protector wants her to come with him *as long and as far as he wants*. He offers her a castle with a vast hunting ground, but it is uncertain how long and how far his wish for Maja will persist. He does not promise it to be forever, though, and by openly stating this “selfishness” Ulfhejm opens the path to a realistic and clear relationship, founded on rags and tatters, goat legs and nakedness, real protection and demands. Their dialogue is more a bargain in which two people even out their accounts for a fair trade than it is a promise of any kind. And yet, even with this kind of bargain, Maja is satisfied and free – simply because of the reality of what has been offered to her.

As an opposition to the every-day and reality oriented agreement between Ulfhejm and Maja, the pair Rubek – Irene shows another, idealistic and otherworldly romantic sensibility. It is their mutual blinding promises that carry them to death by an avalanche. These two characters are the artistic, ideal-driven, lost, dead individuals that help each other live out their passionate ideal of love mixed with divine purity, beauty and goodness for a short time before they die. Their dialogues throughout the play are pathetic; their behaviour is melodramatic, exaggerated, unnatural. They never see each other for what they are, but what their ideal of the other is. They not only idealize each other – but their own selves as well, projecting the force of divine powers and evoking an image of hieros gamos, a divine coupling for their own wedding ritual. Irene is Rubek’s sanctified bride, while he is her lord and master. They express their love in this pathetic and overemphasized way as if they were acting out a romantic novel in which romantic idealism conquers all. Sadly, however,

they are both too old and too soul-drained to be able to live up to their ideals. With their blind and pathos – filled double suicide Ibsen clearly shows the destiny of an idealized love.

Fritz Paul reads Irene's and Rubek's ascend to the mountain as an attempt for "the essential existential for [Rubek's] life by ascending a mountain peak with Irene" (Paul 1994 : 16) This need for climbing up and he search for impressive landscapes is a sign for the metaphysical search of the main character, the artist Rubek. Since Paul reads the play as a representation of the antinomy of art and nature and Rubek as an artist that, in the Freudian sense, is denying his natural part and his sexuality as a human in order to create art as a sublimation of his drives, than the search for the "heroic" and metaphysical landscapes is reserved for him. Irene is there as nature, and

"Nature" is represented not only through (unattainable) ideal interpersonal relationships including love and sexuality; it is also revealed in the heroic landscapes towards which Borkman and Rubek strive, and which are clearly uninviting (Borkman) or unattainable (Rubek) as human nature itself. (...) On the other hand, they embody a poesis that goes beyond the self representation: in their obvious abstraction and symbolic nature they are loaded metaphysically with anthropological and thanatological speculations but without the transcendental religious belief in an afterlife." (Paul 1994 : 19)

These landscapes for Fritz Paul represent the irresolvable conflict between art and nature, symbolically sublimated in the paradigm of climbing and rising. For him, the "conscious sacrifice of happiness in life" (the rejection of the normal everyday family life) "is demonized and associated with the devil." (Paul 1994 : 19) Rubek faces the conflicting battle of nature and art two times: the first time, when Irene was his model, he chose art and discarded his erotic drive. The second time he chooses nature and "[p]ossessed in old age by a strange erotic attraction, which is in no way purely spiritual, Rubek and Irene want to experience a genuine "resurrection" as an act of mutual will." (Paul 1994 : 27) This ascend is also full of biblical references, in "an "operatic," perhaps rather a "cinematic" final tableau, dangerously near to kitsch: Both protagonists, man and woman (she dressed in white!) stand in billowing fog amid snow-decked mountain peaks and climb toward the rising sun." (Paul 1994 : 28)

This motif of climbing and reaching a peak that was dominant in Romantic sentimental poetry, is also very indicative of the attitude towards the romantic ideal that permeates this play. It shows that ideals are lofty, connected to the image of climbing up, to elevation and higher existence. Paul reads this romantic motif as a symbol in Ibsen's late plays that expresses the pessimism and the existential crisis of

the modern man. The modern man is aware of his own position, and in the attempt to live out a “senseless heroic optimism” rushes towards conquering “tower and peak.” In the death of the male characters that strive towards their idealism Paul reads the pessimistic attitude that salvation for the modern human can be found only in death. (Paul 1994 : 29)

However, he neglects the interpretation of the female character’s strive towards the peaks, and he simplifies their drives by giving them the Freudian attribute of nature. As if artists are only men! The case of Irene is a bit more complex, though. She stubbornly persists on climbing up to the peaks of promise as well. She is striving for the artistic ideal as much Rubek. She sees the non-existing tower that gleams in the sunrise as a promise for her desire for marriage, she is hungry for the same lies Maja has had enough of, trapped in the idealized relation to her unrealized love. I would argue that the death of both Rubek and Irene is not an epitome for the “cursed” modern human, but a farewell to idealization and ideal romantic sentimental love.

RUBEK. (*throwing his arms around her ardently*). Then let our two dead souls live life to the full once – before we go to our graves again!

IRENE. (*in an outcry*). Arnold!

RUBEK. But not here, in the half-light! Not here, with that ugly, wet shroud flapping about us

–
IRENE. (*in an ecstasy of passion*). No, no – up in the light and its flaming glory. Up to the peaks of promise!

RUBEK. Up there we’ll celebrate our marriage feast, Irene – my beloved!

IRENE. (*proudly*). The sun will look kindly on us, Arnold.

RUBEK. All the powers of light will look kindly on us. And those of darkness, too. (*Seizing her hand.*) Will you go with me, my sacred – my sanctified bride?

IRENE. (*as though transfigured*). Freely and joyfully, my lord and master.

RUBEK. (*drawing her along with him*). First, up through the mist, Irene, and then –

IRENE. Yes, through all, all the mist – and then up to the topmost peak of the tower that gleams in the sunrise. (Ibsen: 1091-1092)

Ibsen shows the emptiness of both the idealistic epitome of love, sex and marriage of the romantics, as well as the emptiness and false base of the secular bourgeois ideal of marriage imposed by the early capitalist society. While the pathos and unreal promises of the first are to be seen in the story of Rubek and Irene, as a reminder of the falseness of the bourgeois ideal it is perhaps best to point to another play – *A Doll’s House* would be the paradigmatic example. In all of his plays Ibsen shows that the real truth about family relations is far more complex than what it seems to appear on the surface. He rejected any idealization of love and relations among intimates, but he did not reject the idea of the family itself. His plays are persistently dealing with a

coming to terms with the problem of family ideal opposite real family relations. The characters he had created regularly experience a painful and threatening unveiling of truth in order to understand the part that is theirs to perform within a family. Nora Helmer, being the most famous example, once she realizes that she had unconsciously played out a role of the perfect youthful bourgeois wife, rejects the performing of her role in the same way and goes on a search for her real individual essence.

Again Ellida Wangel comes to mind as another example – she accepts becoming a part of a new family as a wife and a mother, but she accepts it after having gone through a total destruction of her own family and a traumatic marriage conducted from a need for financial security. It is clear that the ideal of the family is far away from her experiences, but she accepts the new roles that she has to learn – *she is ready to learn how to perform being a mother and a wife*. Nora Helmer also does not reject the idea of family – she only rejects a family in which a continuous, unaware, boring and society-obeying, secure and familiar, but a soul devastating and self destructive, insincere game is played out. She is rejecting a family that tries to hold on to the family ideal at any cause, since she realizes that such an ideal is false.

Ibsen shows that whenever an ideal – of family, of professional vocation, of moral values, of modes of conduct, of art – penetrates the reality of the family relations, the unity of the family is threatened and it becomes corrupted, just like society is corrupt. Whenever a family starts to function for the purpose of preserving an ideal, or whenever a member of the family disregards his/hers belonging to this unity and starts to selfishly pursue nothing but personal ideals, a tragedy occurs, a total devastation of lives and psyches.

Ulfheim's statement that even after the disappearing of the loosest scratches and rags he'll stand before Maja, free and easy, exactly as nature made him (Ibsen : 1086) refers to the natural behaviour and the supposed freedom one *should have* in the realm of the family. Society is the stage where the different costumes are put on and the different roles performed, where one is punished or praised for the performance, where one is constantly being observed. In the realm of the family, the ideal of natural nakedness, the exposure of the body as it is, the easiness because of not being observed and being utterly oneself becomes reality only with the acceptance of each other's "rags and tatters," and with the offered security from the gaze and judgement of the others.

The loss of family security is a step towards isolation of the psyche that withdraws as a result of loss of ideals. Arnold Rubek from *When We Dead Awaken* is a more than obvious example of a man that has lost his ideal – he is bitter and isolated, and yet constantly limiting himself because “The world knows nothing! Understands nothing!” (Ibsen : 1035) This character is specifically problematic and modern because of lack of a supportive, understanding family. This lack of the feeling for a soothing and comforting ground and the concentration on one’s own private ideas, illusions, goals and ideals is a typical feature of the modern times. People in selfish pursue are oriented towards personal and professional idealistic achievement in order to prove their worth. In Ibsen’s dramas we encounter, for example John Gabriel Borkman who is concentrated on his ideal role of a magnate in the new industrial age, Halvard Solness is lost in his illusion about the power for creation he possesses and in his performance as a sexual and potent man; Ellida Wangel is lost in her ideal of the Stranger – the perfect seducer, a mysterious man, an ideal love; Hedda Gabler is famous for her vague and dangerous ideal of beauty, Alfred Allmers is immersed in his confused ideal of human responsibility, purity and transcendental knowledge without recognizing that it is a really harmful way to deal with grief and death, etc... In fact, all of Ibsen’s plays – the early, as well as the late plays have a leading character that holds on to and shapes his/her life around a lofty ideal. In the early romantic and historical plays the ideal is connected to the romantic ideals of love, religion, poetry and nation, while in the later modern prose plays the ideal shifts to more personal realms (including love and religion as well) and to ambitions oriented towards social status, profession, aesthetics.

This idealized self originates as an idea or an image that comes from the public realm. The characters of Ibsen are so overwhelmed by the performance of their ideals that after a while they forget to be proper and fitting society. Their ideal becomes obsessive, and their whole beings obsessively fit themselves to fit that ideal. These characters are depicted as performing their ideal constantly. Spontaneity was considered to be abnormal in the 19th century. Behaviour was controlled self-consciously, through thinking and planning one’s actions and reactions. This planning is what creates the artificiality or the theatrical behaviour of a person, what constructs their self-given performance. The understanding that a personality develops under the conditioning of appearances and behaviour brought strictness and seriousness even in the most intimate relationships in the modern society. The 19th century personality

was composed of three terms: unity between impulse and appearance, self-consciousness about feeling, and spontaneity as abnormality. The root of personality was a new kind of secular belief; transcendent Nature was replaced by immanent sensation and immediate fact as the hard core of reality. (Sennett 1977 : 193)

Personality thus became a construct, or a multitude of prescriptions on how one should act in given situations. These prescriptions for adequate behaviour did not refer only to the public realm, but they penetrated the realm of the private and the family as well. All of Ibsen's later plays deal with the problem of correct, i.e. accepted behaviour (also) within the family realm. The roles of men and women were differentiated in strict categories, and the behaviour within one's family was also a set of rules. This situation was far away from the ideal of the natural family as a secure hide-away from the artificiality of public life. In such a situation the ways for a person to find their own essence became severely restrictive, the freedom to be one's own self became almost impossible.

The ideal of the bourgeois as the free individual was in collision with the strict rules of performativity demanded from society even within the family. This restrictive freedom is the paradox of the modern human. Among other points, as key features of Ibsen's turn to modernity Moi finds the ironic attitude towards idealism, the scepticism that permeates his works, the fact that the everyday is presented as a possible alternative to scepticism, the criticism of theatricality and self-theatricalization of everyday life, the destruction of love as a consequence of theatricality, and using marriage as a figure of the everyday. (Moi 2006 : 9-10)

The term theatricality as Moi uses it is borrowed from Michael Fried's analyses of Diderot's art criticism. Theatricality is a term that Diderot used in order to make a difference between art that is aware of its own artfulness and has the spectator into consideration and art that has the quality of being completely unaware of a spectator, art which the spectator gets absorbed in. The first type of art is theatrical. Diderot noticed and contemplated on the big difference in the behaviour of people that are observed and thus consciously performing, and people that are alone and perform actions in a genuine manner. He was aware of the roles, or the manners people learn in order to be appropriate, and advised in his *Salons III* that the models for true art should only be genuine people, because the mannerist characters make the paintings unnatural, stiff, academized. (Fried 1980 : 100)

He used the term theatrical in order to signify actions conducted in this manner. Opposite the theatrical were the naïve or genuine actions. Diderot was against obvious mannerism in everyday life, and he stated that the only suitable place for an act with a purpose behind it, an act that is not natural, genuine and spontaneous is the theatre. Even in the theatre the acts had to be conducted as if the audience is not there, i.e. in a manner that resembles the genuine as much as possible. His philosophy is denying absolute politeness in everyday life as artificial, and accepts ugliness as natural. He believed that by being overly polite and full of manners, people are false in their everyday. When people are engrossed in their actions, when they are absorbed in their actions, there is no possibility of being mannered. Mannered is a negative category, in the sense of being a calculated unnatural action. (Fried 1980 : 99-100)

A part of Ibsen's scepticism regarding the bourgeois family ideal and his pessimistic view of the new industrial age derives from the observation of society as based on the rigidity of prescribed behaviour that destroys love, natural relations, and ultimately, ideals. The ideal of the bourgeois as the free individual worked only for those that perceived the artificial social relations as natural, the ones who could not penetrate under the surface of projected and expected images. Those who were surprisingly not acting as expected are the ones that are of Ibsen's interest. His characters do not lack individuality – they are too individual, either lost in their ideal or completely lost in psychological despair because of the new consciousness that the ideal is impossible.

Ibsen can be thought of as *proto-modernist* because of the ability to see through the problematic theatricality of bourgeois society and to predict its consequences before they were reacted upon on a global scale. The artistic world reacted on a large scale to capitalism's demands for a properly performed society approximately fifteen years later, and their revolt lasted for almost twenty years, but in fact remained present until the 1970's. It is still present among marginal artistic and subcultural groups. It resulted with pessimism and scepticism reaching far beyond Ibsen's, with ideas destructive to art and society, but calling for return to natural love and spontaneity. However, we today are the witnesses that even their reactionary revolt turned into a prescribed behaviour which demanded of the artist to oppose and surprise in every respect, as we can read in the various manifestoes of the modernists. Diderot was advocating that the poet (meaning the artist) is the only one that can and should go to extremes, extremes that only he can envisage and represent through his

art, but which will show destructive for the everyday and normal life routine of other people, including the poets themselves.

I am afraid that the man goes straight to misfortune by the same path that leads the imitator of nature to the sublime. Going to extremes is the poet's rule; observing the golden mean in everything is the rule of happiness. Poetry has no place in life. Heroes, romantic lovers, great patriots, unyielding magistrates, apostles of religion, philosophers to the death, all these rare and divine madman create poetry in life, hence their misfortune. They are the ones who, after they die, provide the subject matter of great paintings; they are excellent to paint. (Diderot in Fried 1980 : 81)

What Diderot refers to in this passage are the characters typical for the classical genre of tragedy and the romanticised genre of melodrama typical for the age he lived in – idealised characters in idealized situations. Ibsen had a taste for the characters of his own age, namely, the troubled modern individuals that were still connected to high romanticised ideals. The realistic qualities of his works determine the types of realistic and contemporary characters he was choosing. Through the character Arnold Rubek Ibsen is showing exactly what Diderot was trying to show a century before him: poetry has no place in life, and theatrical behavior in one's private world ruins life. Coming from a romanticist background with the ideal of the poet as one of the main themes, it is clear that Ibsen had to come to this notion through a process of self-reflection.

Self-reflection is a typical feature of modern humanity, and consequently for the understanding of the world as 'staged' as a feature that is typical of the modern human. If one takes into consideration the development and the theoretical dominance of performance studies and theories of performativity in contemporary cultural and aesthetic studies, it is clear that the postmodern human has gone even further and had academized and turned the self reflection process into a discipline.

Through *When We Dead Awaken* Ibsen re-established the artist as a new figure incoherent to the previous and idealized romantic one. In this play Ibsen is portraying an artist that cannot let go of the melancholic despair caused by the loss of the romanticists' ideal about the artist's self. Even the artist is a role to be performed, even for the artist there is a code of behaviour – this is the message that both Diderot and Ibsen are sending. Each historical period brings with it expectations and suggestions on what the nature of the artist really is and how an artist is supposed to perceive the world. Artists are usually considered to be theatrical by nature, overtly dramatic, possessed by ideals and the need to deeply experience the world over and

over. Artists are supposed to be the people whose task is to follow emotion and the need for personal pursuit regardless society. But it is exactly society that imposes this image and these lofty roles to the artists. As Jervis so wisely observes, the modern artists are the ones that best exemplify the modern condition, since they

have characteristically seen it as their task to recreate the unity and the harmony of the world through the creative imagination, hence being in a crucial sense detached from the world. This can easily trap them in a creative paradox, since they have to immerse themselves in the world in order to acquire the stimulus on which their imagination can work. (Jervis 1998 : 10).

However, it is not only that the modern artists have isolated themselves from the world – it is also that the world has continued to nourish this image of the artists as detached from the norms of society and interested in achieving ideals. Both the artists in the romanticist times, as well as the artists of high modernity were expected to best exemplify the condition of the world and the philosophy in these periods. The artists are shaped by the expectations of the others up to the point when these expectations form an image that becomes a personal ideal – and this idealization of the self leads to theatrical behaviour. It is also expected that the artists have an inherent mimetic approach to the world, in their aesthetic work and in their ethics it is expected that they should have sublimated and represented the world outside. Diderot and Jervis are both expecting the same performative function of the artist – to be the most exemplary sample of the ethic and aesthetic conflicts of a certain age.

In this respect, Ibsen's last play, *When We Dead Awaken*, is a play about a self-idealized and self-reflective artist who is repetitively exercising and performing the role of being an artist but is trapped between his ideal of artistic creation and reality. He is rich with the tool for uncovering the arbitrariness of relations, but lacking the healthy attitude that saves from cynicism and melancholic despair. It is a play about the most paradigmatic problems of the modern condition of the self.

Erving Goffman had made a separation between the impressions that one "gives," which are results of calculated actions rehearsed in the mind and impressions that one "gives off." (Goffman 1969: 14) The impression that one *gives* is theatrical and acted out, while the impression that one *gives off* is authentic, it is the part of identity that we feel is 'natural, inherent'. In terms of performance, the acted out impressions correspond to our conscious performances, while the other corresponds to our unconscious performances. If we follow Judith Butler's (1997) thought, these

unconscious performances are a result of society shaping us like subjects, the influence of the public on identity and identity formation. We are always subjects subordinated to certain rules, since not conforming to the world of others, i.e. society, means a kind of death, isolation and sanction. The self is always attached to these processes of subordination, because it needs to be formed and to emerge as a subject. This attachment is the basic mechanism of power that establishes the formation of the I as a subject dependent on the powers that form it. At the same time, every self, every individual's I desires the conditions of its own subordination so that it can exist. Otherwise, it would have to change and turn into something else, i.e. a person would need to change his identity, which is an unwelcome process that brings feelings of insecurity, fear, and can lead to melancholy triggered by the loss.

Therefore, the self persistently and compulsively repeats, performs, re-enacts the situations that formed it so that it can confirm them. The desire of people to preserve their self, their identity, is in indissoluble connection with social life. What Butler shows is that every person is lingering on the idea that they can preserve their own being while, at the same time, the ideas of what this being should be are never the person's ideas, they are ideas dependent on social norms. Therefore, every attempt to preserve one's own being and every attempt to remain in the self assumes belonging or comforting to a world of others, performing a learned world of others. In this sense, what we are as subject is the impression that we *give off*, while what we perform knowingly and consciously with the purpose of achieving a goal or a result is the impression we *give*.

The impression that a person *gives off* depends on the presence of that person. Very often we are unaware why we are identifying people with certain characteristics or groups: but the whole being of a person is the impression that the particular person *gives off*. The four characters in the play *give off* a certain impression, which is actually the way they are described and introduced in the play by Ibsen: Rubek *gives off* the impression of an aged artist, isolated in his own world, wealthy, respected, but sad, sometimes cynical and bitter. Maja *gives off* the impression of a young, beautiful and full of life woman with signs of tiredness. Irene *gives off* the impression of a madwoman, trapped inside a world of her own. She is not a natural and happy being. Ulfhejm *gives off* the impression of an ill-mannered, loud, wealthy and self-sufficient person that does not have too much respect for high society or morals. Within the play, Irene and Rubek *give off* theatrical, aestheticised and unnatural impressions.

According to Goffman, it is the calculated actions of a person, performed in order to achieve something that are to be considered theatrical. In the case of Rubek and Irene it is very difficult to determine this limit, since it is disputable if they are aware and calculating of their theatrical actions, especially in their mutual interactions. These two characters seem melodramatic and theatrical all the time when they interact, but the reason why they do it cannot be considered “calculated.” Their reactions to each other and the way they act in public are determined by their images of themselves, as well as by what they *were giving* as impression to each other in the past. As we find out from their dialogues, they have not been truthful to each other and they have both *given* the impression to each other that they don’t desire each other, acting out something else. Rubek was acting out his ideal of an aesthetics-possessed artist, she was acting out the sculpture (which is also Rubek’s aesthetic ideal). When they meet again, they both *give off* the impression that they’ve been suffering all the time they’ve been separated, while in the mean time they both changed their identity: Rubek became a bourgeois, and she became a public woman. However, what they really think they are, i.e., what they were idealizing themselves to be shapes them in a strong and inseparable way: and they both die in the end in an idealized death suitable for the idealized pattern they followed throughout life. The struggle of these two characters is to change their identities in full.

Their identities have been completely shaken in the past: they have been shaped, by circumstance and by own belief as ideological art-lovers, and then they tried to change that, disappointed by their art ideal and by love. They adopted identities borrowed from the world around that proved to work unsuccessfully for them and brought them to melancholic despair and madness. That is why when they meet at the end of the play they have to go back to their own familiar ground, to their first idealization, and re-perform their first meetings, only with a different, “corrected” scenario that makes them lovers and spouses. They seem pathetic with the effort to lift their meeting to the realms of divine coupling, but this theatricality is due to worn-out, historical and museum value of their thinking. *They are thinking and acting like romantic heroes, not like modern human beings.*

Sofie Gram Ottesen reads Irene as Ibsen’s most melodramatic figure and connects her to the melodramatic image of Hollywood’s unknown lady of the silent movies of the 30’s and 40’s. Her muted nature is a sign for the modernist scepticism in expression through language, a scepticism that all of the protagonists in the play

possess in different extent. Following Stanley Cavel's analyses of melodrama as characterized by a desire to express all, this same need also brings fear, "namly, the terror of absolute inexpressivness, suffocation, which at the same time reveals itself as a terror of absolute expressivness, unconditioned exposure..." (Cavel in Gram – Ottesen 1999 : 153) Rubek's nature is muted, since he also disbelieves his art's power to tell what he wants to say. Since both Rubek and Irene suffer the same problem that comes from not being able to express, it is interesting to look at what is it that they want to express so desperately. Through her constant exposure, Irene was trying to express herself, her own body, her need to be seen as a living body. Through his sculpture, Rubek was also expressing himself and his own view of himself and all around him. They both change their way of expression after they parted – Irene was first an idealized model for Rubek, and then a model on a turning table. Rubek first represented a woman's body as aesthetic ideal, then an artist in remorse, and then grotesque portraits with hidden animal faces. Their performance of their visions of the roles they are playing is through objects – and in this sense Irene is objectifying her own body. Rubek on his hand is creating objects as art. What they seem to lack is expressing through themselves, through their own performance. This would also allow them to speak, both verbally and sensually, with the body. A person's performance is complex, it is consisted of the whole appearance of a person. Insisting only on one part of it (or the objective part) brings disability to express, because language is not the only way of expression. One observes oneself as other, as a judge, and tries to create the most perfect, idealized performance in all situations when objectifying one's self in any aspect. Scepticism about one's own self-expression comes as a consequence of fear of change of identity.

Goffman explains how the performance of the role a person consciously adopts is successful to the extent it is authentic, and this success depends on the belief in the part one is playing. In the play we observe Irene and Rubek that linger to the idealist call of the artist while at the same time they are suspicious of it and wanting 'a normal life'. They are sceptical, hurt and insecure in the parts they are playing, and have to 'always act it out' in order to confirm it both before their own self and the others. And this is why they seem so melodramatic and theatrical. They are performing the image that suits the ideal that they see in themselves, every action is thought off and 'dramatized' in order to suit that image. But once their ideal was shaken, every conscious attempt to return to it seems pathetic and theatrical. They

have perpetually repeated what they have become to the point that they are not aware of what they are repeating. And this is why they are dead, but alive – they are dead because they are unaware of their being, always cramped to perform their idealization completely, not letting even love to threaten it. The fact that they cannot escape their unconscious idealization makes them tragic. They belong to the past, or to the world of art and literature, not in the bourgeois reality.

Like Diderot said, they are excellent to paint (or to write about), but the very same features that make them interesting in a literary work would prove extremely negative in reality. Placed in a realistic play, they seem like unnecessary theatrical and melodramatic people, psychically troubled. In real life these two characters would belong in a mental institution, or at least need help. Their place is really disputable within a realist context. With such a portrayal of the main characters, with the symbolical setting of the play, with the fine and subtle coordination between realism and the romantic genre of melodrama (that I believe works like an intertextual reference in *When We Dead Awaken*), this play is a paradigm for the beginnings of modernism. I see the play like a realistic meta-text of melodrama, a very lucid and skilful blending of a seemingly disparate genre and method.

In fact, Ibsen found a lucid solution and realistically marked Irene as insane, as under surveillance of a Nun, so she can fit into the realistic pattern of representation in the play. The story about her insanity and her being in an institution is also a story that cannot be believed absolutely since it comes from Irene's mouth – she is obviously 'not well.' There is no way of finding out how much 'not well' she really is, and how much she acts out in order to drive Rubek to 'face her again'. From the moment they meet, she is determined to kill him, and she approaches him with a constant threat of her little knife and her insanity, *while being aware that she is insane* at the same time. She had already killed two husbands, and she admits that in the past she would have killed Rubek if he approached her. She also threatens him with a knife again, and yet Rubek is not afraid of her and they go up in the heights to die together. She shows a remarkable level of consciousness for an insane person, but she cannot be trusted as sane. Rubek shows remarkable trust in such a person, since he is not afraid of her. She simply had to kill the man that killed her ideal. He simply had to kill her ideal because it threatened his. And when they meet again, they praise and uplift each other as nothing ever happened.

Rubek and Irene have an aestheticised relationship that is motivated by fulfilling aesthetic ideals through and while performing life; they are partners in creating illusions, as much as they are partners in disbelief and in disillusionment. What is interesting about their mutual relationship is that they accept each others obvious theatricality as authenticity, and feed each other's attempts to live out the gone idealization in the hope that it can fulfil them, while at the same time they serve as each others reason for losing the ideal at the first place. Theirs is a circular relationship of accusing and accepting, of accusing the Other and then becoming the Other.

On the other hand, Maja and Ulfhejm are in coordination with the impressions that they *give off* and that they *give*. They are shaped by their performing and by their past experiences: Maja was a girl from a poor family that got into marriage because she was promised the glories of the world, she always acts with an awareness of what she wants to achieve, when she is playing games she is aware that she is playing. She cannot respond to a search for ideals and elevated beauty because she does not see them – they are not a part of her identity. I believe that Maja is the only true modern individual in this play: she is also the youngest of all of the characters. She embodies the qualities of the free individual and the pragmatic views on life characteristic for the modern thinking. Ulfhejm is also pragmatic and needs freedom, but he belongs to an old noble class of people – he is a romanticized portrayal of a person that lives his life according to his own rules. He and Rubek are similar in their need to have a nice looking young wife to accompany them – they represent the power of men in the 19th century society. Ibsen has touched the problematic topic of a young good looking lady and a serious older gentleman before as well, most notably in *The Lady from the Sea* and *The Masterbuilder*.

In his early writings E. Goffman viewed the apparent performative feature of social life as only cynical, as purely with the purpose of achieving an effect. He later understood that this apparently purely cynical attitude is actually the foundation of trust in society and social relations, since it is what is familiar, secure, and reliable. It is what supports identity. (Manning 1992 : 8) In the discourse of Butler, it is what shapes us as subjects. Cynicism is an inevitable condition of the awareness of one's own performing, simply because disbelief in the authenticity and good intention of one's own actions implies disbelief in the authenticity and good intention of other people's actions. Nevertheless, conforming to situations, conditions and surrounding

and taking up roles with a full consciousness can become so much a part of one's self that at the end the performance is completely natural and without any cynicism. A person usually starts believing a part that he is playing if it's played long and authentically enough.

Goffman (1982) also created the concept of *face*, which corresponds to the persona on a level that keeps the 'good reputation' of the persona. The concept of face is actually the adaptable performativity of the persona that insures the good and proper fitting in society and keeps interaction within conventional limits. The individual is always under a certain amount of pressure for keeping the face, meaning that a person has to always keep in mind the place he\she has in society in order to maintain it. (Goffman 1982 : 7) This is the basic regulatory power of society – it works through each and every individual, pressuring and creating fear of 'loosing the face.' It is for this reason that Rubek will not allow to be called "a country boy in a high toned society," (Ibsen : 1043) and this is the reason why Ulfhejm is so despised among the hotel employers and the manager. The concept of *keeping the face, or face work* covers all the action an individual takes in order to keep the balance between what is expected from him by the image he projects and his actual actions.

Face work is actually the poise, or the protection against 'incidents' that may threaten the image of a person, while the willingness of a person to maintain a face is actually a measurement of how much a person belongs to the 'ritual order' of society. When a person is alone, or within the private and intimate realm though, the face and keeping the face can create a lot of conflict. What is acted out for the public has to be done with awareness, and every attempt to deny the intention of the actions performed and to think of them as 'natural' is actually what leads to living in a life-lie situation. Goffman suggests that

perhaps the main principle of the public order is not justice but face, and what any offender receives is not what he deserves but what will sustain for the moment the line to which he has committed himself, and through this the line to which he has committed the interaction ...Universal human nature is not a very human thing. By acquiring it, the person becomes a kind of construct, built up not from inner psychic propensities but from moral rules that are impressed upon him from without." (Goffman 1982: 45)

Tom Burns (241) points to Goffman's observation that society, and all the different forms of communities are all shaped and fabricated by constructs. "...[T]he same

applies... ..to the social identities we are assumed to have and to the personal identities we know we are.” (Burns 1992 : 241)

Social life is a line of roles that need to be performed, no matter how natural they may seem. Consciousness about these seemingly ‘natural’ performances is necessary so that they can move into our normative value systems as a “[r]ecognition that our lives are structured according to repeated and socially sanctioned modes of behaviour.” (Carlson 2004 : 4) Every change in society, as well as any change in ideal brings a heightened awareness of these normative value systems that function through establishing roles. This notion “raises the possibility that all human activity could potentially be considered as performance, or at least all activity carried out with a consciousness of itself” (Carlson 2004 : 4) Therefore, performance would be every action that is done with an awareness of the doing. What Judith Butler and Erving Goffman have shown is that even those acts that seem natural to us, in fact, our very behaviour and identity is a set of learned performances, a set of complex mechanisms that build us as subjects and individuals and make us see the world in a certain way. Some of these performances become roles that are so general and common – such as gender, that they are only thought of performances in the cases of exceptions, when they are extremely theatrical, such as while ‘performing a drag’. (Butler 1999)

A performance is always executed in front of an observer\observers, i.e., it always has an audience, or a mental comparison with an ideal or a model that is thought of as original. In some cases the audience is no one else but the self, and still, even in these cases the performance is executed with the purpose to be judged, valued or perceived in a certain fashion. In such cases, it is usually one instance of the ego that perceives and judges another. So, it is not only that we perform only in relation to everything that is externally other, but we also perform in order to “act out” protective psychic mechanisms, in order to preserve our image of ourselves. It is not only in public that we have to work on the face, but we take the same work with us in our homes and in our reflections. Ibsen, through the theatrical and melodramatic atmosphere in *When We Dead Awaken*, is showing us the same, presenting us with the torment of people that strive to preserve their own ideas of what they are and what they should be. These characters are not only persuading each other – their real performance is consisted in re-iterating, repeating the show on and on in front of their own selves.

Performativity and theatricality are one of the most exploited and most pervasive concepts in culture and the world rhetoric of the past two decades. Today these two terms are especially vital for the rhetoric of politics, up to the point that one speaks of staging of the nation, of politicians as performing, performance of governments, staged trials, etc... Modernity staged itself through art, science, institutions (the museum is one of them, the nation-state is an institution also) and the idea of the free individual embodied in the bourgeois. Postmodernity developed as an uncovering of the fact that what was thought of as 'authentic, natural and realistic' is a performance. Theatricality is just one, very artificial, aesthetic, emphasized performance. Performance and performativity are concepts that are slowly replacing the concept of theatricality, since they are applicable to an even wider range of activities and phenomena. Consequently, performance has become a wide metaphor as well as an analytical tool, a dominant in theoretical discourse. In the same sense, every theatre performance is a performance, but every performance does not necessarily belong to theatre. The postmodernist idea of the world as performance has replaced the former structuralists' idea of the world as a text. As Thomas Postlewait and Tracy C. Davis observe:

As might be expected, a new opposition or polarity has emerged: theatricality (in its essentialist strain as the defining trait of dramatic and performance texts) versus performativity (in its imperialist strain as the unifying idea for cultural and social behavior.) In consequence, the idea of performance has become a broad, multidimensional concept that is used to interpret human activities, from folk cultures and social ceremonies to gender identities and political actions. (Postlewait and Davis 2003 : 31)

However, the opening of the term performance in such a broad way brings the threat of becoming a term that will eventually create an allegory for everything. The semantic range of the term performance is blending with the range of the term theatricality and creating confusions. The spread of theatricality "from an act to an attitude, a style to a semiotic system, a medium to message," has made the definition of theatricality almost impossible, as from an all inclusive definition as "the semiotic codes of theatrical representation" to an exclusive definition as "a specific type of performance style. [...] Thus, to some people, it [theatricality] is that which is quintessentially the theatre, while to others it is the theatre subsumed into the whole world." (Postlewait and Davis: 1) Both of the terms – theatricality and performance connect to issues in theatre, performance art, aesthetic theory, history of aesthetics,

semiotics and communication theories, the subject and subjectivity, public and private life.

Schechner notices that the theory of social life and cultures always in some respect deals with acting, and that learning how to perform is always connected to the social sciences and their interpretations of behaviour.

Theatre is the art that specializes in the concrete techniques of restoring behaviour. Turner's theory, like Goffman's, is actually a theatrical one generalized to suit social process. Working the same field are Geertz, Rappaport, and Myerhoff. The field is fertile because individual cultures and world monoculture are increasingly theatrical. (Schechner 2007 : 2)

Historically, the two terms: performance and theatricality can be traced back to the two oldest and most influential ideas that connect theatre and social life: Aristotles' idea of theatre as *mimesis* of life and the Latin idea of *theatrum mundi* that have been exploited to the point of becoming clichés.

Although the idea of theatricality is in a seeming etymological opposition to antitheatricality, it must be pointed out that the second term is tied to a historically pervasive opinion of theatre and theatre people as not-moral and illusionist, while the first to a quality of a certain performance. Antitheatricality resembles an attitude against theatrical art and all behaviour that is role-adopting, not-authentic and lie and fakeness provoking. Ever since Plato, and all the way to our modern times, theatricality has been thought of and labelled as negative by philosophers and influential people such as Saint Augustine, the Puritans, Rousseau, Nietzsche, Sartre, etc. The negative attitude towards theatricality has also been a pervasive conviction of Christianity. The very vocabulary of theatre and many of the expressions involving theatre are usually connected to negative, low-valued and undesirable character features, such as: "theatrical, melodramatic, playacting, putting on a performance, making a scene, making a spectacle of ones self, playing up to..." (Postlewait and Davis 2003 : 4)

In general, realism was against melodramatic theatricality and it was constituted as its opposition – it became a method that rejected theatrical behaviour on stage. This is a consequence of the new, bourgeois, 'free' individual that was acting out to be spontaneous and natural. And since realism portrayed reality, theatrical behaviour on stage implied a negative value to the character. Modernism on the other hand was positioned in an opposition to realism, but in a way that allowed the concept

of theatricality as a positive connotation. In modernism, through the notion of meta-theatre, by introducing self-referentiality, consciousness and the concept of *mise-en-scène* in the plays, theatricality

had become, in great measure, positive in denotation and connotation. And it had attained an aesthetic aura and justification apart from its long (im)moral heritage. Moreover, the idea of theatricality could now be used to describe key attributes of both imagination and genius. (Postlewait and Davis 2003 : 13)

For the modernists, theatre was acceptable only if and when it was a contra-reaction to the tradition of mimetic representation of reality, as in “antiquarianism, pictorialism, naturalism or realism.” Realism was a reaction to melodramatic art, and modernism a reaction to realism. Modernism insisted on meta-theatricality and on awareness of theatre of its own performative character, and was calling upon theatricality as an immanent characteristic of it. However, it was not calling for absolute theatrical behaviour of the actors on stage. It was simply building up an awareness of theatre as staged, and insisting on stressing the staging of the plays. Artifice was theatrical and praised by the modernists, while nature was considered simply not interesting and dull, boring.

The most common oppositions that derive from the basic one of artifice and nature, such as: “real versus false, genuine versus fake, intrinsic versus extrinsic, original versus imitative, true versus counterfeit, honest versus dishonest, sincere versus devious, accurate versus distorted, revealed versus disguised, face versus mask, serious versus playful, and essential versus artificial,” (Postlewait and Davis 2003 : 15-16) show how all things theatrical are in connection to the negative pole. This negative opinion of theatricality and theatrical behaviour was widely present among Protestants, especially in the Northern European countries and USA in the 19th century, and it is rooted in bourgeois and class prejudice. These countries and times were especially hostile to female actors who were considered to be immoral and corrupt. (Davis 2003 : 20) Thus, theatricality gained another connotation – it became connected to women and their behaviour, to excess of sexuality and to decoration.

In fact, any kind of theatrical behaviour, especially among women was stigmatized and considered immoral in the early capitalist times. Men could also be repudiated because of their theatrical behaviour, although it was not considered to be their traditional feature. Oscar Wilde, one of the first public homosexuals was also a famous public figure connected with theatricality and immorality and a victim of it as

well, although he himself had perceived this as a high value, and as the only tool in life against boredom and dullness. He was aware of and self-conscious about theatricality, and he used it as a tool for his own public performances and for the creation of his own personas. His famous quote of Mrs. Cheveley from *An Ideal Husband*, that she prefers to be natural “[s]ometimes. But that is such a difficult pose to keep up” (Wilde 2000, Act II) is indicative of the biggest difference between theatricality and performance in relation to everyday behaviour, as well as theatre. Every theatrical act must be performed, but not all of the acts that we perform are theatrical. A person can perform to be natural, and a theatre play can be performed ‘realistically and naturally’ – although these are performed actions, they don’t necessarily need to be considered theatrical.

In this respect, Tracy C. Davis defines theatricality as crucially different then theatrical, and observes the difference between the meanings of these two etymologically similar terms as grounded in the attitude of the audience. The scholars of the end of the 20th century have, according to him: “attributed conscious mimeticism, audience presence, and behavioural resemblance to stage genres or styles as “theatrical” characteristics and called them theatricality” (Davis 2003 : 128) Similarly to Diderot, he points to the absence of theatricality in performances that are performed in a way which absorbs the audience to the extent that “the audience forgets that it is spectating,” and yet still are theatrical. (Davis 2003 : 128)

He traces the first uses of the term theatricality to Thomas Carlyle and his using of the term in order to express a failure to do something with sincerity. Although the term theatrical often points to a negative value of artifice, it can also point only to a simple conclusion that something is done with a lot of obvious skill, excluding the negativity. Very often theatre is used as a synonym with theatrical, and although every theatrical act is dramatic, while every dramatic act is not theatrical, the term theatrical is often used to signify that something is dramatic. Carlyle was using theatricality as a term that is opposed to nature and natural behaviour, thus indicating the original use of theatricality: *in order to signify mimetic behaviour in real interaction*. Carlyle had a negative attitude to this mimetic behaviour when it was obviously false, i.e. unnatural, not to mimetic behaviour, i.e. theatricality as such. In this sense, Carlyle is close to Goffman’s and Butler’s views of behaviour and social life as performed, and his concept of theatricality corresponds to Goffman’s idea of “face work” and impressions one “gives.” When the face work is too artificial, and

when the impression one gives is obviously acted out, the behaviour of that person has a dose of theatricality.

Theatricality has been connected not only to femininity, but also to facial masks, or the concept of wearing masks. Davis (2003: 146) Even the concept of face work of Goffman resembles putting on a mask and making efforts to keep it. Theatricality in everyday life is close to this idea of wearing a mask because of the parallel that lies in the relation between the person that is behind the mask and the person that shows theatrical behaviour. In the Introduction to *Masked Performance* John Emigh remarks that the relationship of the one that wears the mask to the mask is a paradigm for the relationship of the self to others, as well as of the self to self. It is this relationship that is the heart of any processes in which a certain role is worked out. The person that is 'acting out' the mask has to harmonize with it and adopt a 'suitable' persona, adopt a suitable language, or a speech, as well as behaviour for the new persona that is to be acted out. Just like the one that is confronted with the mask, the person that is theatrical is confronted with the idea(l) of the behaviour that he/she presents to someone else. Theatricality in everyday life, just like wearing a mask, is a process of confrontation of the self with an Other, it is a process of choosing, putting on and performing 'a persona'.

In *When We Dead Awaken* we encounter Irene's description that resembles both a statue and a mask. When she first appears in the play, she is described as "*dressed in fine, cream-white cashmere, followed by a NUN in black, with a silver cross on a chain at her breast... Her face is pallid and drawn, like a plaster mask; her eyelids droop and her eyes appear unseeing. Her gown is full-length and clings in long, vertical, folds to her body. Over her head, neck, breast, shoulders and arms she has a large, white crepe shawl. Her arms are folded up in a cross over her breast. Her carriage is rigid, her pace stiff and measured...*" (Ibsen: 1040) She looks "*at Rubek with empty, expressionless eyes...*" (Ibsen: 1046 – my bold) In the play we discover that she had killed her two previous husbands and that she had been "on revolving platforms in cabarets, as a naked statue in a living tableau. Raked in reams of money that way." (Ibsen: 1047)

In the end of 19th century the general opinion of women as 'naturally' acquired with the traditional roles of mothers and wives, full of compassion, empathy and understanding was a clerical, stable and wide-spread belief. Theatrical women were immoral and dangerous. But the new industrial age created another image of women

that collided with the traditional one – an image of women that could be cold, distanced, practical and cynical as much as any man. And the only way they could prosper in society run by the bourgeois highest value: capital and money, was by selling an image of their bodies, by putting on masks and decoration. Therefore they were demonized and attributed with pathologic features, thought to be deadly and dangerous, theatrical and artificial. Artificiality depends not only on the one that performs or acts out, but also on the one that perceives, i.e., on the audience. The concept of what is theatrical, and what cannot be considered as such has changed through the ages. In the age of aesthetic modernism, female theatricality and the ‘unnatural behaviour’ of women in modernized society was one of the main focuses of interest.

From this interest, mixed with the romantic interests in the uncanny demonic woman appeared a fashion that was shaped according to the archetypal image of the dangerous, seductive and mysterious *femme fatale*. Although the middle class bourgeois had an extremely negative attitude towards them, *femme fatales* were very popular and connected to women working in theatre and opera in the end of the 19th and beginning of 20th century. All public women had a *femme fatale* aura around them. They were desirable and feared. There were specific corporeal and psychological features that a *femme fatale* had to obtain, a complete ‘body mask,’ and also a certain fashion she needed to follow, a form of behaviour she was to show. A *femme fatale* was a prescribed role to be acted out, and a woman could put on the right mask in order to fit it.

This fashion can also be noticed in Ibsen’s works, especially in the appearance of the character Mrs. Wilton in *John Gabriel Borkman* and the attitude that the other characters show toward her. Another typical *femme fatale* in Ibsen’s works is Hilda Wangel, the famous child-seductress that challenges Solness to his death. The form of the archetype of the *femme fatale* as a child seductress is another specific late modernist topic – the surrealists were especially interested in her mystical powers. In the study of femme fatale imagery in visual art - *Femme Fatale – images of evil and fascinating women*, Patrick Bade reveals the different ways the theatricality of the *femme fatale* influenced the general culture of late 19th and early 20th century.

They [the *femmes fatales*] are pale, proud, mysterious, idol-like, full of perverse desires and yet cold at heart. The link between eroticism and death is always present, as is an atmosphere of perverse cruelty

that became increasingly intense as the century drew to a close... The subject was always perceived in the same terms: women as malignant, threatening, destructive and fascinating.” (Bade 1979: 8-9)

The connection to Irene is more than obvious here. She is like a statue, tormented because of an unfulfilled erotic desire with Rubek. Her sexuality is perverted. But she also has been exposing herself as a staged body and had men falling in love and suffering for her, and she killed her two former husbands with a sharp knife she carried with herself in bed. Patrick Bade mentions Ibsen, along with Strindberg and Munch as the “the three great Scandinavians” that used realistic and symbolic elements in their work in order to present the destructive power of women in a modern bourgeois domestic setting. (Bade 1979 : 23)

However, my belief is that this presence of powerful and destructive women in Ibsen’s work is not due to his negative attitude towards them, but due to his awareness of the performances that women were obliged to perform within the early capitalist society. Ibsen never portrays his *femme fatale* – like characters as completely typical femme fatales. A real femme fatale was punished for her actions, she was usually completely cold at heart, emotionless. Ibsen portrayed women who are not calculating their actions in order to profit and don’t kill with a plan, who act because of circumstances that have shaped them in this fatalistic manner. In my opinion, it is not that the depiction of such women serves the purpose of showing the reason for the destruction of the bourgeois’ home – rather than that, I believe that Ibsen was portraying women as captivated within the bourgeois home – most obviously in *A Doll’s House* and *Hedda Gabler*. When these women try to change their position they gain the quality of being ‘*fatale*.’ The self-awareness of women was what was destructive for the false ideal of the bourgeois home that reserved the freedom for the ‘gentlemen.’ It is also what was destructive for women, since a woman had no choice but to be labelled a *femme fatale* – an advanced and aestheticised form of a prostitute, in order to survive outside the shell of the bourgeois home. The women that dared to develop an open awareness and to change their identity had to be demonized and hidden under a mask, because that was not a ‘feminine’ thing to do.

Mary Ann Doanne stresses that the appearance of the *femme fatale* is immanent to modernism, and it is also associated with body decoration and emphasized external features, in order for her sexual appeal, attraction and seductiveness to be accentuated. In this way, the femme fatale is brought closer to

another phenomenon that is associated with modernity and Victorian times – Orientalism, and the femme fatales that originate from, or are associated with the Orient. Actresses, singers and dancers of the late 19th century were especially using this image in order to create their public personas. Within Ibsen's work, this aspect of the "exotic dangerous" is also present, embodied in Anitra from *Peer Gynt*. "The femme fatale is a clear indication of the extent of the fears and anxieties prompted by shifts in the understanding of sexual difference in the late nineteenth century." (Doanne 1991 : 1-2)

Irene possesses some of the typical femme fatale features, although in her youth she had been actually fatalistically seduced and left soulless by Rubek and although she does not fully possess the necessary legendary detachment from her victim, typical for a paradigmatic *femme fatale*. Regarding her two dead husbands she is a typical *femme fatale*, but in her relation to Rubek she loses the necessary detachment and the killing ability. In regards to him, she undergoes a fall from the status of the pure, virgin-like creature idealized by Rubek (as the perfect image of innocence embodied in "The Resurrection Day") to a publicly displayed, soulless body and a *femme fatale* killer. She had been exposed for wealthy men to look at, and she had used them for their money, driving them insane out of passion for her. In the narrative about Irene's experiences after she had left Rubek there is a sign of critique towards the conditions in which the modernist interest for *femme fatales* flourished: they were much desired and extremely despised at the same time. Their beauty was fatal and connected to something daemonic or unnatural while in fact they were the product of the social and cultural conditions of the age, a highly theatrical, aestheticised and conceptualized form of beauty. They were perceived as if they live in a constant state of possession, a daemonic trance, as if they lived their lives in a vampire-like state.

In general, femme fatales were observed and characterised as cold, detached, acting out their successful seductions in order to use a man's wealth and power and after that leave him devastated, as metaphoric female vampires that suck the soul out of men.

IRENE. (*looks straight at him*). Wait, now, let me see – Yes, now I know. I've stood on revolving platforms in cabarets, as a naked statue in a living tableau. Raked in reams of money that way. That's more than I ever did with you; you never had it. And then I've been with lots of men, the ones I knew how to drive wild. That's also more than I had with you. You held out better.

RUBEK. (*letting the matter drop*). And did you get married, as well?

...

IRENE. He was a South American. A high diplomat. (*Staring into space with a stony smile.*) I succeeded in driving him quite mad: insane-incurably, unreachably insane. It was a choice diversion – while it lasted. I could have laughed constantly inside – if I'd had anything inside.

RUBEK. And where is he now?

IRENE. In a churchyard somewhere, with an imposing monument raised over him, and a lead bullet rattling around in his skull.

RUBEK. He killed himself?

IRENE. Yes, he was kind enough to anticipate me.

RUBEK. You have no grief for him, Irene?

IRENE. (*blankly.*) Grief? For whom?

...

IRENE. My second husband is named Satow. He's Russian.

...

IRENE. (*shrugs.*) Living? Living? Actually, I've killed him -

...

IRENE. Yes, with a fine, sharp dagger I always have with me in bed.

...

RUBEK. And where are the children now?

IRENE. I killed them.

RUBEK. (*sharply.*) Now you're lying to me again!

IRENE. I tell you, I've killed them. Murdered them with a vengeance. Just as soon as they came into the world. No, long, long before that. One after another.

RUBEK. (*sadly and somberly.*) There's something hidden behind this whole story of yours.

IRENE. I can't help that. Every word I say is being whispered to my ear. (Ibsen: 1049)

Here Irene is presented as having a rigid and unnatural personality, as a death-possessed, insane and dangerous woman. She is extremely theatrical, as if in a trance, as if someone else is speaking through her, as if her self had disappeared under the constant influence of the fatale mask she had put on. She is ghost-like from the very moment she is introduced in the play, and she embodies the double romanticist idealization of women: in the past she was the pure, untouched and virginal creature, while after her transformation she had become a ghostly seductress.

Her behaviour and her speech are confused, fragmented and irrational. She speaks of being dead and spending time under ground, voiceless, with a strait jacket around her, thus evoking madness. It is the others that have tied her up and thrown her underground, but there is no specific person or institution that is mentioned as having done this to her. At the same time, she does not seem to remember that time very well, she hesitates and speaks slowly and in a fragmented manner of those times. The Nun that is following her everywhere is mentioned as carrying the strait jacket constantly around with her, but it is not so clear if the Nun is the one that had put it on her at the first place, or is just carrying it with her as a reminder and a corrective threat of what might happen again. "You are the blame I had to die," says Irene to Rubek, (Ibsen: 1050) thus blaming him for her death-like existence.

At this point she is unable to pass over and leave the trance-like state, as if the mask she is wearing had possessed her up to the point when her essence is lost. However, she also cannot perform the persona from the mask totally and she cannot be a successful *femme fatale* when it comes to Rubek. She holds her sharp knife as a threat to kill him, but she does not really perform the act either. Irene, just like Rubek, is portrayed as mercilessly clinging to an idealization that is isolating her from reality, and it is making her look theatrical and pathetic up to the point of insanity. However, no matter how much she resembles an other-worldly creature, her portrayal in the play is realistic, as much as the portrayal of the Nun that follows her is realistic. This realistic portrayal saves from the mystical feeling and uncanniness that the romantics were so obsessed with, and brings a quality of meaningless and emptiness that brings Ibsen's play closer to modernism and connects his works to the fall of romantic idealism. Instead of creating an atmosphere of elevation and wonder, the realistic portrayal of Irene and Rubek, as well as their relationship, shows how painfully theatrical and deluded these two characters are. By portraying Irene as suffering, Ibsen is actually 'humanizing' the *femme fatale* archetype.

Even Maja has some of the *femme fatale* element in her, although she does not possess any of the mystical qualities Irene has, and she is absolutely sane and clear-headed. However, she is not a typical bourgeois wife as well. She is dependent on men, but her behaviour and her speech are free, even provoking. My belief is that through the portrayal of Maja as clinging to men for her economic survival, especially since she is a very young woman married to an older man, Ibsen was pointing to the unjust and hard circumstances that women were exposed to in early capitalism: they had no choice but to perform images and adopt identities that were appealing to certain types of men they wanted to attract. Women were not allowed to adopt awareness; they were much more punished than men if they fell into a crisis of identity. Men could survive as melancholics in society, while women were doomed to hysteria and straitjackets. If they were lucky, they would turn out to be like Maja, able to continue their lives by leaving any self-idealization and idealization behind.

Another pointing to masks and use of masks in *When We Dead Awaken* is the description of the portrait-busts. Rubek created the portrait busts as masks, where the human face is the mask, and the domestic animals lie behind it. Animals have been used to allegorically represent human traits and characteristics since the earliest forms of moral lessons in folk tales and myths. The short mentioning of the animals hidden

behind human faces brings a heavy implication: the animals behind the mask are performing the humans, the virtuous rich. These are domestic animals, tamed and peaceful, content, but taken care of only to be killed.

RUBEK. There's something hidden, something sinister behind and within those busts – a secret something that ordinary people can't see –

MAJA. Oh?

RUBEK. (*his tone arbitrary*). Only I can see it. And it amuses me no end. On the surface is that so-called striking likeness that everyone stands and gapes at, transfixed. (*His voice dropping.*) But down at the deepest core are respectable and worthy horse faces and the stubborn muzzles of mules-lop-eared, low-browed dog skulls, and pampered pig snouts- and every so often the heavy, brutal resemblance of a bull-

MAJA (*carelessly*). All our dear, domestic animals.

RUBEK. Only the dear, domestic animals, Maja. All the animals that human beings have distorted in their own image. And that have distorted human beings in return. (*Drains his champagne glass and laughs.*) And these perfidious works of art are what the virtuous rich come and order from me. And pay for in good faith- and through the nose, too. They're almost worth their weight in gold, to coin a phrase.

MAJA. (*filling his glass*). Enough, Rubek! Drink up and be happy.

RUBEK. (*runs his hand several times over his forehead and leans back in his chair.*) I am happy, Maja. Perfectly happy. In one way, at least. (*After a pause.*) For of course there's a certain happiness in feeling totally free and independent – in having plenty of everything one could imagine wishing for. In material terms, anyway. Don't you think? (Ibsen: 1036-1037)

The domestic animals are connected to material security and the virtuous rich, they are an allegorical sign for the illusion of the freedom and independence that the same material security was supposed to bring. The bourgeois ideal of the free individual was supposed to be possible within the bourgeois society, but it was society that was taming people like animals. The tame animals are used to being thrown food at, to being taken care of and feeling secure, and their destiny is one of complete captivity. It is the same with the rich: they are playing out to be the virtuous and free human, while in fact they are dependent on the security that stupefies them. In the case of the domestic animals, it is men that have shaped them for that kind of a life: in the case of people, it is society. Just like the domestic animals have no idea that there are also wild animals, that they could escape their imprisonment, and search for their own means of survival, the comfort seeking bourgeois is not aware how much animal-like he is, materially secure but dependent of the mercy of society. Although Rubek is the one that sculpted the portraits in such a way, at the moment we meet him in the play, he is just like the virtuous rich that he parodied in his art. His awareness is not turned to self awareness, but to a cynical and bitter attitude towards the Other.

As Emigh points out, the masks show the attitude of the self to others, but also the attitude of the self to itself. It is not a human face under the mask of an animal, but

an animal under the mask of the human. It is not only the people affecting the animals, but the animals shaping the people. And it is only Rubek that can see this, since he is the one that made the plot for such a performance. I read Rubek's secret revenge on the bourgeois identity and their values as an actual attack on himself, on what he had allowed himself to become.

Davis connects theatricality to its pragmatic purpose in everyday behaviour and interaction as a means of euphemism in cases when we cannot show empathy or sympathy to our co-speaker, but still wish to remain polite. (Davis 2003 : 153) While we are engaged but not absorbed by what we observe, we can attribute theatricality to that particular performance, and withhold sympathy, i.e. identification. Then we become observers that 'act out' the role of observers, we let ourselves act out 'a person that behaves properly.' Although this attitude may seem cynical, it is in fact very important for maintaining contact in cases when there is no empathy, or no interest in real communication with the other. "I am... ... arguing or enabling effects of active dissociation, or alienation, or self-reflexivity in standing aside from the suffering of the righteous to name and thus bring to being the position of a critical stance. And, like Carlyle, I call this theatricality." (Davis 2003 : 153) With this Davis is erasing the negative connotation to theatricality in everyday life, but pointing to the very reason why we consider theatricality to be such a negative value – obvious theatricality prevents identification of the self with others and real communication, thus bringing scepticism and alienation in the front. Obvious theatricality brings a double scepticism: it is a sign that the person who is theatrical cannot reach to the other and feel empathy, and thus feels sceptical about the possibility of communication and understanding. It is also a sign of the scepticism that arises in the person theatricality is displayed at – this person also becomes sceptic regarding the powers of his own expression and communication.

And it is exactly here that Ibsen's criticism of theatricality in intimate relations and the family is focused: such behaviour saves from confrontation with others, but leads to isolation and emptiness of the self. The cynicism that comes as a result of constant self-reflection and reflection of one's relation to the others is the pervasive characteristic of the modern human. The constant self-reflection of one's relation to others leads to awareness of performativity. The awareness of performativity leads to doubting the other's actions as authentic and natural. This doubt leads to fear and isolation. Isolation leads to self-reflection and a need to

understand one's self and the others, it leads to a need for belonging. But every effort to belong somewhere implies a constant reflection of relations. This reflection leads to awareness of the performances in life. The awareness of performativity leads to doubting the other's actions as authentic and natural...

As Davis shows, as Goffman realised in his later works, and as Butler figures out on the level of the psyche, this circular process is the same thing that we build our lives around in modern society, it provides us with what we know, what we have learned how to perform. If we perform it right, we get applauded and achieve our goal. This circular vicious circle is not so terrible and should not lead to scepticism, since it supports identity. However, the ego cannot so easily accept the awareness of not being authentic and being a construct, so therefore it builds a mechanism of scepticism and isolation from the world of others. In some cases, the process of self-reflection and awareness can be so devastating for the self-image of a person, that the person can fall into a state of melancholia.

In *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997), Judith Butler revised Freud's notion of melancholia as a psychic state following the loss of a loved object, or a loss of ideal(s). In cases of melancholia, the ego refuses to break the connection with the ideal and withdraws in itself, creating an inner world. The lost ideal is replaced by one part of the ego with which the ego identifies, and the critical instance of our psyches, or the super ego makes this identified part an object of criticism, much like a 'constructed, performed' inner dispute. Because melancholia is a state of internalization, it can be seen as "a psychic state that has effectively substituted itself for the world in which it dwells." (Butler 1997: 179) As an effect, one loses the social relations, because this self-beratement overtakes the ego and the psychic life: the ego standing as the idealized object, and the critical agency throwing the rage at it. The splitting of the ego results with forming an internal perspective used for judging oneself. In this way, reflexivity becomes one of the main characteristics of melancholia. Or melancholia becomes an inevitable consequence of reflexivity.

In melancholia, not only is the loss of an other or an ideal lost to consciousness, but withdraws into the psyche a configuration of the social world as well. The ego thus becomes a "polity" and consciousness one of its "major institutions," precisely because psychic life withdraws a social world into itself in an effort to erase the losses that the world demands. Within melancholia, the psyche becomes the topos in which there is no loss and, indeed, no negation. Melancholia refuses to acknowledge loss, and in this sense "preserves" its lost objects as psychic effects. (Butler 1997 : 181)

The melancholic is never aware of the loss he had been subjected to, because the loss is withdrawn from consciousness, it is inexpressible. This same impossibility for expression of loss leads to a heightened consciousness in general. This paradoxical situation is due to the consciousness's attempt to regulate the aggression that is a result from the experienced loss, and consequently, to control this anger from showing out. Society also regulates what losses should and should not be grieved, and in this way initiates consciousness to be even more violent towards the split part of the ego. In such a situation, the one that suffers the loss cannot ask for compassion from anyone else but oneself. Thus, there is an ambivalent situation of the need to express grief and the social regulations that don't allow this expression – and the melancholic is left to ask this from himself, while at the same time feeling anger for not being able to express himself outwardly. This results in a turn of the melancholic on him self, blaming himself for his own worthlessness. The melancholic is characterized by lack of self-esteem, as a result of the paradoxical situation of the ego turning against itself. The ideals that the ego uses to judge itself with come from the outside world, and are defined by society and culture. Therefore it is logical to presume that, as a part of the ego's judgments and as a part of what negates the expression of grief, these ideals are also a subject of anger.

Thus, a loss in the world that cannot be declared enrages, generates ambivalence, and becomes the loss "in" the ego that is nameless and diffuse and that prompts public rituals of self-beratement. ... What cannot be declared by the melancholic is nevertheless what governs melancholic speech – an unspeakability that organizes the field of the speakable." (Butler 1997 : 185 – 186)

In *When We Dead Awaken* Arnold Rubek is not able to let go of his romantic self-ideal of the artist, just as he was not able to acknowledge the loss of Irene when she left him. Instead of articulating his anger towards Irene who left him, he changed her position in the sculpture and introduced himself, as if in remorse. However, this act was not enough as an articulation, and he continued to create portrait busts, cynical depictions of everyday people, animals under masks. Animals cannot speak, and, just like Rubek, they are voiceless, muted under the mask they are performing. Irene is also muted under her own mask – she is described as a disturbed person and she has been treated in institutions where she'd been put underground in a tomb. She doesn't express her anger for Rubek's killing of her ideal verbally, but she shows dangerous aggression through her knife. She has shown this aggression even when she modelled

for him, protecting thus the self-idealisation of her own body. She and Rubek manage to come to terms together just before the ending of the play, when she uncovers the truth about her feelings and tells him about the knife she was constantly carrying with her, and when he expresses his remorse for “put[ting] the dead clay model above the joys of life.” (Ibsen 1090 - 1091) It is then that they see life and light again and head for the peaks of promise. They had to articulate their remorse in order to be ‘fried’ of the melancholic despair. This instant relief carried a renewed and short-lived life-force that made Rubek throw his arms around her ardently, and to draw her closer to him, and make her look as if transfigured and in an ecstasy of passion. (Ibsen: 1091) This confession of suffering opened their self-berated hearts and filled them once more with the idealism they re-perform, only to die as a consequence of it. In one sense, this death in an avalanche matches their idealized images perfectly. It is perhaps the best ideal-satisfying death they could have ever thought of or performed.

The awareness of our constant performing has always existed in the history of humanity, but it became a specific and strong feature of the modern human of the 19th century. It inevitably leads to cynicism, emptiness and bad faith. Many of the pre-modernists and modernists, including Rousseau, Nietzsche, all the realists, and the existentialists later despised theatricality in life. In the existentialist thinking, the performative nature of life corresponds to the concept of ‘bad faith.’ Awareness of performance, when internalized as a hidden loss of authenticity is what is so devastating and evoking a persistent feeling of emptiness, closed communication, not-understanding and restriction. It is also the cause for expressive disability.

The modernists were fascinated by broken, fragmented language, silence and the disability to express one’s self. If we attribute the artists of the modern period with the need for freedom and individuality at its maximum, than we can conclude that they are the ones that would suffer the consequences of these attitudes the most. This is the problem for which Ibsen was searching the answer in the everyday, which I would characterize as non-artistic, absolutely avoiding self-reflexivity. However, seeing, belonging and accepting the everyday is not a simple solution to this problem, because even the everyday is full of disappointments, theatricality, performances, lies, difficulties. Even the purest and most simple person has to deal with the public. This is another problem that is persistent in Ibsen’s work: namely, how to live through it? The answer is not in idealization or heroic patterns – the answer to this questions lies

in a phenomena related to theatre and performances – in fact, it lies in adopting a *playful, ego-training attitude to life as a game*.

5. The Playful Solution

The words game and playing games, as well as allusions to game playing, childhood and childish behavior are an essential part of Ibsen's last play, and I believe that they are there with a purpose – the author chose to place them in the text in order to turn our attention to this very important aspect of life and artistic creation. Hopefully, the analyses of these aspects and elements should lead to an amusing possible interpretation of the play. I think that, in general, it has been interpreted without having in mind this lucid and ludic aspect of it, because of the 'too serious issues' it discusses and the two tragic deaths at the end of the play.

Hub Zwart had observed that in his later plays Ibsen focuses on subjects such as discontent, nausea, disappointment and boredom. He had also observed that there are game-like, playful, as well as cynical and comic aspects in his last play, aspects that allow laughter to come in, mainly through the mutual mocking of the characters. This mocking and the laughter are important in order to "reveal each other's true and basic objectives by mocking the feigned, 'official' ones." (Zwart 1996 : 181) Rubek, for example, is mocking to his costumers and society through the features of animals that he attributes to them under the ordered portrait busts he sculpts. What Zwart points connects to the awareness of the difference between the performance that one's true self wants to achieve in life and the performance of 'official' truths, or wishes. These official truths are the self-adopted ideals of the characters that constitute their persona, the public part of themselves, their improved or idealized self-image – namely, their life-lie. Through the mutual mocking the characters reveal the true opinion they have of the others in the play, as well as of their selves. Zwart reminds that in this play

that which seems rather serious on the outside, is actually hiding something ridiculous: a grotesque grin. The serious exterior is mocked and ridiculed by that which is buried inside. Basically, what is conveyed by this parody, the portrait genre as it came to be reshaped by Rubek, is that the official human life is really a comedy. Its true aspect is temporarily concealed but by no means silenced by the official, boring countenance of earnestness." (Zwart 1996 : 184)

To represent human life as comedy or parody by using animalistic imagery is one of the most ancient techniques of parodization. At the same time, it is again another pointing to the performative qualities of life. In *When We Dead Awaken*, through her constant mocking of Rubek Maja reveals him as a comical figure, which is only emphasized of his constant self-presentation as a serious and tragic character. Maja's down-to-earth logic and interpretation of Rubek's speech reveals in him a dimension of wicked calculation – all his artistic spirit and idealism gets transformed into a transparent and greedy situation in which we observe how he uses the people as objects for inspiration which he gets rid of after. The same is revealed through Irene's verbal attack on him – he had used her only as a tool for achieving his artistic ideal, justifying his simple and greedy act with his artistry. When he is introduced in the play, Ulfhejm also performs a mockery of Rubek – by calling him a country boy in a high-class society. However, Irene is not spared from the pathos and theatricality of her own self-idealization as well – Maja also reveals her as pathetic and over-dramatic in their only verbal exchange in the play.

MAJA. Professor Rubek's waiting for you up there, madam.

IRENE. What does he want?

MAJA. He needs your help with a casket that's jammed its lock.

IRENE. Can I help him with that?

MAJA. He believes you are the only one who can.

IRENE. Than I have to try.

MAJA. Yes, by all means, madam, do try. (Ibsen: 1067)

Maja's seriousness while speaking in metaphors is mocking, subversive. The seriousness with which Maja and Irene have this talk is ironic and cynical, unexpectedly revealing about Maja's attitude to Rubek and Irene. As a wife Maja should be afraid, jealous off and irritated by Irene, but she accepts her and uses her for her own liberation, with sympathy to both her and Rubek. In fact, Maja serves as a 'common sense' corrective in the play, she is the active instance against idealization and theatricalization. She is, however, very aware of the performative functions in life and she uses them for her own benefit, but she does not allow idealization to get into her head and lead her to a desperate situation similar to the one of Irene. Even her name is indicative of illusion and disillusionment – Maja (maya) in the Hindu belief system is a term that signifies the illusory nature of the manifest, physical reality. Zwart claims that

Ibsen's way of revealing the strive for power as a basic impetus at work underneath the official motives of individuals was through laughter. ... In Ibsen's play laughter is an experience of intrusion, causing the demarcation between the private and the public to collapse. As an artist, Rubek represents the intrusion of laughter into the serious genre of portrait bust. (Zwart 1996 : 191)

By abusing and harming others he manages to remain self-collected. Zwart sees laughter as overflowing Ibsen's work. This laughter is not harmless and serves the purpose of exaggerating tragic conventions. It introduces the problematic relationship between moral subjectivity and public society. Subjectivity is inadequate and creates problems for the individual that have to be solved by a form of laughter that laughs at all that is eternal and unchangeable – including beauty and artistic ideals. The play itself is a mockery of art and artistic ideal, of marriage and family life, of religious beliefs, etc. Zwart reads *When We Dead Awaken* as permeated with a very large dose of cynicism, for which laughter is the only cure. "When We Dead Awaken reveals the intimate connectedness of the truth of tragedy and the truth of laughter. Eventually the modern individual, trying to find his way out of an 'impossible' situation, will have to rely on strategies of laughter." (Zwart 1996 : 193)

Vigdis Ystad has a similar point of view and connects Ibsen's last play to a reading that brings the play closer to the concept of the truth of tragedy (and laughter). Ystad tries to avoid the established opinion of the relation between life and art as the tragic foundation of the play and sees life and art in this play as

ulike fasetter av et dobbelt, paradoksalt og uløselig forhold, der kunsten ikke er livets motsetning. Livet selv, slik mennesket gird det form og mening, kan i stedet i seg selv være en form for kunst – og kunsten kan oppfattes som et middel til å mestre tilværelsen ved å gi den form og mening. Kanskje er det en oppfatning i retning av en slik mer positiv poetikk som uttrykkes i Ibsen's dramatiske epilog. (Ystad 1999 : 66)

This view of life as art, or art as life, is one of the foundation of performance art as live, or living art. Ystad points to the possibility of reading of this play as an attempt to introduce a self-aware theatre, a theatre that is emphasizing its own theatricality. "Vi kan faktisk se utformingen av når vi døde vågner ikke bare som en henspilling på tendenser i samtidens bildende kunst, men også som stykkets understrekking av sin egen kunstkarakter." (Ystad 1999 : 66) This suggests that the play is an actual performance of the aesthetic ideals of Ibsen, or a story of the aesthetic ideal of Ibsen, but not in the biographical sense. It is performance of the art of a historical period, it is a performing history of art on stage. Ystad calls upon the Nietzschean

understanding of drama as Dionysian art and the Ancient Greek's understanding of life as a constant interplay of the chaotic forces in order to point that

[s]kjønt de førsokratiske grekere ifølge Nietzsche oppfattet livet som kaotisk og fryktingytende, preget av umettelig vilje og begjær, ble de allikevel ikke pessimister: De hadde nemlig evnen til å omdanne liv til kunst, det vil si å betrakte livet i alt sitt kaotiske mangfold som et estetisk fenomen (...)

(...) Det sier seg selv at et slikt kutsyn ikke oppfatter kunsten som virkelighetsflukt eller falsk idealisme, men tvert om ser en estetiserende holdning som menneskets mulighet til å tale og erkjenne virkeligheten og livet, i hele dets totalitet. (Ystad 1999 : 73)

While the traditional concept of performance connects to a display of skills in front of an audience, or to theatrical art as craft, there is another use of performance that is connected to the awareness of pretending to be someone, or something else. This concept of performance brings it much closer to two other related and very old phenomena: play and ritual. Both of these phenomena, especially ritual, have been discussed and suggested as the origins of theatre. Eli Rozik tried to balance the dominant theories of the ritualistic origins of theatre by investigating mimetic play, an obvious psychological impulse with children. Because of social and cultural conventions, a grown up cannot play games of imitation (although this is a basic psychological impulse for grown ups as well), and instead of this, daydreams. Writers and other creators of fictional worlds are the ones that materialize this inner activity through their work. The innumerable references to Ibsen's early childhood interest in puppet theatre and his own performances of theatre when he was a child can serve as an amusing contribution to this theory (Mohr 2005) but although this certainly is not a proof for the theory and not an assuring reason for Ibsen becoming a dramatist, Rozik's view on "literature and theatre, each in its own medium and on different levels of complexity" (Rozik 2002 : 273) as metaphorical descriptions of psychic reality whose core is imitation holds a refreshing view on the relations between ritual, play and theatre. He establishes a theory of the interrelation between ritual and theatre not as one of origin, but as one of parallel existence. The roots of theatre lie in the imagistic thinking and play, while ritual is a mode of action that reflects modes and purposes. Theatre is neutral in regards to modes and purposes, it is only a medium that can be used in any kind of action, or better, *its devices* can be used in any kind of action, including ritual. (Rozik 2002 : xi) Rozik's theory of the origins of theatre implies that the tools of theatre thus can be used *in everyday action, as well as in play*.

Play is a complex of activities essential for theatre and its aesthetics, as well as performance. Johan Huizinga and Roger Caillois have been central in establishing the main theoretical apparatus for study of play, although folklore, anthropology, philosophy, psychology and ethnology also investigate this unclear phenomenon. In fact, Johan Huizinga looks at all culture (including theatre) as a derivative of play. A summed definition of play, according to Huizinga, is:

a free activity standing quite consciously outside 'ordinary' life as being 'not serious,' but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. ...The functions of play in the higher forms which concern us here can largely be derived from the two basic aspects under which we meet it: as a contest for something or a representation of something. (Huizinga 1955 : 13)

Roger Caillois agrees with Huizinga that play is an uncertain voluntary activity that is separate from life. However, instead of arguing that it is unprofitable, he is arguing that it is unproductive, since there are games, like gambling games, for example, that bring profit. Caillois considers play to either be governed by rules or mimetic, but never both at the same time. (Caillois 1961 : 9 - 10)

Play is usually connected to ludic aspects and non-seriousness, but in fact, play is the first means of education of people and holds very serious and deep consequences if used for pragmatic reasons only. The pioneer of performance studies, Richard Schechner pointed to the universal and old connection between life, theatre and play by turning attention to the ancient Hindu concepts of lila and maya, both used to signify illusion. Lila(s) are sports, play, theatre, while maya is the illusory reality. These Sanskrit terms define both lila and maya as reality, as well as illusion at the same time, pointing to the notion that reality does not really exist, that the only thing there really exists is just another form of game or play (Schechner 1988 : Introduction) Reality is nothing more than a sequence of acted out performances on many levels.

Schechner's understanding of performance as an event embodies both ritual and play. All rituals are a particular kind of performance used to provide structure and continuity, and they have real consequences that serve the purpose of establishing the relation between an individual and society. (Bial 2003(a) : 77) Play is the force of uncertainty which counterbalances the structure provided by ritual, and thus play is full of innovation and creativity. These two phenomena are contingent. (Bial 2003(b) :

115) Therefore, Schechner defines performance as: *[r]itualized behaviour conditioned/permeated with play,*” as a state and an act in which man ‘improvises’ the laws of society. “...Art may be considered a specific coordination of play and ritual.” (Schechner 1988 : 95) This ritualized behaviour was later developed into the concept of ‘restored behaviour’ – the kind of behaviour separated from the normal reality of the person performing. ‘Restored behaviour’ is the behaviour of a person in so-called liminal situations that occur during theatre performances, rituals, trances, games, shamanistic practices, etc.

The overtly used term liminal was first used by anthropologists Van Gennep and Victor Turner in order to clarify situations of passage, transition or initiation within a culture. Anthropologically, liminality is used to describe states of ambiguity and passage after which the order of the normal reality is re/established, such as weddings, funerals, wars, catastrophes... Liminal are all situations that happen within a “negotiated space-time-event,” so that the participants’ experience erasure of accepted and common facts (usually of their own behaviour or position in the world) and so that the participants become open and vulnerable to new knowledge and experiences that serve the continuation in a new existence in which they display what they have learnt. (Schechner 2000 : 3)

The basic function of liminality is in fact normativity, since the result of every liminal situation is re-integration. However, sometimes the result of a liminal experience can be a complete displacement of norms, a crash with the surrounding one has to reintegrate in – in which cases the laws that are not respected by the one that was a subject to liminal experience are replaced by other laws that are established by the same subject. After a while these new norms become normative as well. (Mc Kenzie 2004 : 28) Schechner’s theory of restored behaviour is in fact a theory of relation of the self to the role performed, or, more accurate, to *the distance* between the self and the role that is performed in liminal and liminoid situations.

Liminoid is a term that Turner developed later, signifying cultural activities in advanced societies, in which labour and leisure are sharply disconnected from each other, i.e. in which there is self-awareness for one’s private life. Liminoid activities are not something that people have to go through simply because they are a part of a community – it is something that they choose or not choose to go through. Modern society is characterised by a disappearance of liminal activities and their replacement by liminoid. One of the changes that the industrial age brought were individualism

instead of collectivism, as well as people's right of choice. Consciousness about one's private life, modernist self-reflexivity and the awareness of the performative nature of social life have all contributed to the disappearance of collective liminal activities. In liminal activities, a person has to be possessed by and believe in the process of transformation – and the whole community confirms this transformation. The modern times individualism closes our experiences for the public. Going to theatre, playing games, attending concerts – all these are liminoid situations. While a liminal situation implies a transformation, a liminoid situation implies experience. In fact, from its very beginning theatre was used to represent liminal situations, but a theatre play is in itself a liminoid experience.

When We Dead Awaken is a play that implicitly has liminality as its topic: when they are introduced in the play, both Rubek and Irene seem to go through a personal liminal process – Rubek can not create, he can not express himself, he does not belong anywhere and his art is not understood. Irene is presented as a living – dead person, a description that speaks for itself. He is isolated and beyond expression, in a world of silence, constantly travelling after he had created “The Ressurrection Day.” She is half-mad, as if possessed. She speaks of the past as the other world, and of herself as “gone to the other side.” (Ibsen: 1047)

RUBEK. (*evasively*). Hm – let's stop talking about the past –

IRENE. Yes – no more talk of the other world. Because all that is the other world now, for *me*.

RUBEK. Where did you go, Irene? I made inquiries everywhere, and it was as if you'd been erased from this earth.

IRENE. I went into the darkness – while the child stood there, transfigured in the light.

RUBEK. Where you travelling a lot?

IRENE. Yes. Travelling in many lands and countries.

RUBEK. (*gazing with compassion at her.*) And how did you manage to live?

...

RUBEK. (*leans with his hands on the table and looks searchingly at her*). There's a thread inside you – that's snapped.

IRENE. (*gently*). That must always happen when a young, full-blooded woman dies.

RUBEK. Oh Irene, give up these wild obsessions - ! You're alive! Alive, alive!

IRENE. (*rises slowly from her chair and speaks tremulously*). For many years I was dead. They came and bound me. Strapped my arms together behind my back – Then they lowered me down into a tomb, with iron bars for a trapdoor. And the walls were padded – so no one up above on the earth could hear the shrieks from the grave – But now I'm halfway beginning to rise from the dead. (*She sits again.*) (Ibsen: 1048 - 1050)

Like Rubek, Irene was also constantly travelling before they met again. The feeling of isolation and not belonging that comes with living in a liminal state is not relieved, but confirmed and enhanced by constant moving and avoiding experiences that bring intimacy with other people. Both Irene and Rubek operate strictly by their own rules,

disregarding society and standards when it comes to their self-image. They appear as constantly performing 'restored behaviour,' possessed by the roles that they have put on. As we find out from the play, after she had left Rubek Irene was living as a marginal member of society, earning "on revolving platforms in cabarets, as a naked statue in a living tableau. Raked in reams of money that way." (Ibsen: 1048) Because she believes that her soul was taken away from her, Irene exposed her body and used it as a living statue – she objectified herself and no longer accepted any ethic ideal, in the service of preserving the aesthetic ideal. She was performing a statue, a soulless body. Although she doesn't want to speak of the past and considers it to be the other world, she is in fact stuck in the past and the past experiences from the time when she believes she was alive and had feelings.

Her "halfway beginning to rise from the dead" (Ibsen: 1048 - 1050) leads to nothing else but to a re-creation of that same past. Her need to awaken from the dead awakens the need to revenge and express her anger for what had been done to her, while at the same time she is holding to the time spent with Rubek as the ideal time she has to return to. However, her awakening does not last long and by the end of the play she falls into the same trap that led her to become a living statue. This time it brought her to her physical death.

She is stuck in perpetually performing her own spiritual death that cuts her away from ethics and morality and constructs her as a deprived, soulless victim of art. Her own rules rule her world, and society is nothing but a corrective outside force – she is constantly followed by a Nun with a straitjacket. The exposure of her body is probably the only way that she could have survived in society in such a confused state, and by making a spectacle of herself she had functioned as an artefact, as an object on display. As a person she is dangerous and must be under control – as an object she is desired and raked in reams of money.

Frode Helland analyses Irene both as a subject and an object, as a passive victim and an active victimizer, to come to the conclusion that she is not a pure object, and that, just like Rubek, Irene also has an aura of death around her.

Men hun er, som vi har sett, allikevel ikke rent objekt, ren passivitet. Som fra en Medusa utgår det en død fra henne. Slik hun hevder at hun ble drept under hans blikk, ved at han <<sled sjælen du af>> hennes blodvarme legeme (XIII, s. 259), har de som senere har gjort henne til objekt for sine blikk, blitt rammet av en dependende bevegelse tilbake mot den som ser. (Helland 1999 : 140)

In this ambiguity of the portrait of Irene, Helland finds Ibsen's pointing to the terror of the clear subject-object-relationship, the terror of an exposure of a person that turns to suffering. And in this suffering, according to Helland, lies the need for the freedom to change and adapt. However, the only adaptation that finally occurs is pure physical death.

Because of his self-idealism, Rubek is also viewing himself as under a special condition. He knowingly asks Irene if she had been travelling a lot, (Ibsen : 1048) as if he could feel in her the same despair he feels in himself. Because of the need to be distinguished from the rest of the world as an artist, and because of the need for uplifting transformations, he cannot accept the fall of his own idealization and he cannot accept to continue living with the new knowledge that places him in a more common position. The second version of "The Ressurrection Day" represents this fall, and it is after the sculpting of this piece that he cannot settle down or create anything else but grotesque portrait busts. Rubek cannot fit public life and society, and he is, just like Irene, in a move, travelling and crossing borders in order to escape it. It is as if the laws of society had crashed and disappeared for him, and the only truth applicable for him is the story of his own idealization and fall. He is performing the artist from the sculpture, stuck and frozen, while the world is about to be transformed and everyone else is experiencing an awakening into eternity. Rubek can't leave his idealization, and even though he is aware that it has taken the experience of reality and the everyday away from him, by the end of the play he is blindly striving to God's realms, peaks of promise, and his own death.

MAJA. (*behind him, bending over the back of his chair*). You tell me. You've begun moving restlessly from place to place. You can't seem to settle anywhere, neither at home nor abroad. And lately you've become so withdrawn, you don't want to see people at all.

RUBEK. (*with irony*). No, really – have you noticed *that*?

MAJA. Anyone who knows you could hardly miss it. And then I think it's so distressing that you've lost the urge to work.

RUBEK. *That*, too?

MAJA. You, who once worked so tirelessly – from dawn on into the night.

RUBEK. (*despondently*). Yes, once. Yes –

MAJA. But ever since you finished your masterpiece –

RUBEK (*nodding pensively*). "Ressurrection Day."

MAJA. – that's been exhibited all over the world. And that's made you world famous.

RUBEK. Perhaps that was the great mistake, Maja.

MAJA. But why?

RUBEK. When I'd created this masterpiece of mine – (Ibsen : 1035)

Rubek's disappointment in his creative ideal led to his fall as a person. Creating is a liminal-like state of positive trance that did not allow reality to penetrate his own private world – but as soon as that process was over, social reality manifested itself through the grotesque deformation of his portraits.

The narrative line of *When We Dead Awaken* is a performance of the history and the story of creation of "The Resurrection Day." The history of the creation is retold in two ways in the play: through *the retrospective dialogues* of Irene and Rubek, who retell their story of their 'child' and the fall of the romanticist ideal, and metaphorically through *the performance of their game of swans and lilies* in Act II. When they first met, the artist and his model first came together and attempted to perform the romanticist ideal story of creation: the idealist artist wanted to sculpt a pure and beautiful young woman as the ideal image of resurrection. While the creative process lasted, he stayed away from her physically as a man because he believed that such an act would pollute his artistic ideal. However, when he finished the model of the body in clay, the artist's pragmatic attitude and his referring to their relation as 'an episode' hurt the young woman and she left him, thus denying his goodness. She had served the ideal of creation as obediently and as truthfully as it was her own and she had been the ideal model, but with her leaving him she destroyed the ideal of the artist in him. When she left he changed the sculpture so that it fits his new knowledge of himself and the world – he presented himself contemplating in remorse for what he missed (since he lost both his self-idealization and the beautiful woman). This is the story of the creation and the first fall that we get to know from the retrospective dialogues.

The second story is performed in front of the audience: the sad and tormented artist meets his former model and they both agree that their lives have been miserable, mute and death-like since they have parted. It is interesting how they both behave in a way that connects them to the sculpture: Rubek performs in his life the representation of himself in the second version of it, and Irene performs the representation of herself in the first version of "The Day of Resurrection." He is melancholic, desperate, isolated from the world, while she is awakened from death, statue-like, expressionless. The play itself is the story of the second fall that ends not with a spiritual, but physical death. The attempt to perform history once again failed to have a happy ending in real life.

Helland reads Rubek as an artist “sunk” in a process of melancholy allegorization. (Helland 1997: 83-100) This process prevents from accepting the sensual aspects of life and makes it hard for him to accept anything that disturbs his allegorization, anything that is Other to it, be it even an undeniable fact such as the physicality of the woman that exposes her body in front of him. (Helland 1997:91) In the accent put on this process of allegorization Helland finds the main difference between Ibsen’s attitude towards the creating (life-giving, Pygmalion-like) artist and the romantic’s attitude to the same depiction. While the romantics focus on the artist and his powerful and elevated ability to create and give life to dead matter, in Helland’s view, Ibsen focuses not so much on the nature of the artist as much as on the process of allegorization itself, i.e., on the process of shaping and confirming himself by the constant performing of an idealized, Pygmalion – like image of himself. Helland also points to Rubek’s desire to control (Helland: 89), accentuated in Ibsen’s play by the parallel between bear-hunting and sculpting that Ulfhejm so wisely explains to Maja. (Ibsen : 1044) The goal of the two activities is common – to become “lord and master” over the material, and Irene uses these same words when she yields to Rubek’s desire and follows him into their deaths. (Ibsen : 1091) According to Helland’s interpretation, both the sculptor and the hunter aim at completely taking control that leads to a kind of death – in the case of the bear it is literal death, and in the case of the artist it is the spiritual death of the model. The fact that Irene is a living woman threatened Rubek’s artwork, because by touching her he would become less profaned. That is why he refused to accept any aspect of her that is not connected to his idea of the sculpture, and put the sculpture between them as a sort of a protective barrier. Seen through the perspective of the modeling of the sculpture, Irene was being modeled as a person as well. For her, following Rubek was like returning to childhood. “It was the rebirth of my childhood, to go with you” – she says to Rubek, who responds that this is “why [he] could use [her] best of all.” (Ibsen : 1052)

To me you became a sacred creature, to be touched only by worshipful thoughts. I was still so young and innocent then, Irene. And the conviction filled me, that if I touched you, or desired you in sensual terms, then my spirit would be profaned so that I couldn’t have created what I was striving for. And I still think there is some truth in that. (Ibsen : 1052)

By behaving like a child and adopting child – like behavior, Irene had opened to modeling and acceptance, just as she had opened to his ideal once again at the end of the play. She is constantly performing Rubek's fantasy – game, performing to be the ideal woman he needs at the moment. Interestingly, Rubek also refers to Maja, his young wife, as a child, but in an ironic, patronizing way. "Well, *mein Kind*, maybe you're right," and "You really are a particular little person," (Ibsen : 1032) thus referring to her naivety and ignorance. He also tells her the story of how he led her into playing his wife and following him, just like he led into play the children from his old neighborhood, by promising them that he would show them all the glory of the world if they follow him into the mountains. "Well, hasn't it been a fairly amusing game?" (Ibsen : 1037) he asks coldly, and then explains to her that "[she] is really not made to climb mountains," and calls her "Maja, my pet." (Ibsen : 1038) He thinks that the five years they spent together are a long time and that the passage of these years has made her uninteresting for him.

Rubek displays consciousness about his playing very selectively. Sometimes he 'leads people into play,' while other times he is 'absorbed' by the essence of his creative ideal. Irene, who is completely responsive and empathic to his pathetic and overall theatrical behavior is irreplaceable – and therefore adored, desired, sculpted, idealized, but not touched. Maja is played out, insulted, chased away and she is not an object of any kind of art. The reference to child-like behavior and games is more than naïve in the play. Rubek is able to 'feel' only for the person that has a childish attitude towards him – that trusts his stories and confirms and maintains his idealized self.

In his analyses of the relation between Rubek and Irene, both as persons and through their sculptor – model relationship, Jørgen Dinas Johansen points to the fact that the psychoanalytical theory of sublimation through art (which has often been mechanically used in order to explain Rubek's physical indifference towards Irene) might not really function in Irene's and Rubek's case, because they are both constantly regretting that they hadn't started a normal sexual relationship. (Johansen 1997 : 108) Irene is not only the model, she is also the originator of "The Day of Resurrection." This hints towards a deeper and different relationship than the ordinary model-artist relation. Further on, Johansen points that Rubek's narcissistic ability to see in Irene (for all times) only what he dreams of her makes up for the real sexual contact. This substitution can be understood in the sense that he is making her (his dream) eternal (by sculpting, and therefore fossilizing her form). (Johansen 1997:109)

Irene is presented as the only reason for Rubek's ability for creation, as well as the only condition for creation – after she left him, he hadn't been able to create anything else but portrait busts. To both the sculptor and the model the sculpture serves as a trance-narcissistic object, but it also connects them with social reality, because of its deep connectedness with the physical body. (Johansen 1997 : 110)

The sculpture as an aesthetic object served as a game-field for performance of their idealized image of themselves for both of them, while at the same time allowing them to see the embodiment and the materialization of their ideals in it – for Rubek it is the ideal of art and pureness, and for Irene it is the ideal of creation (the sculpture is a re-creation of herself, but a child as well). The sculpture is a liminal object that possesses the soul of Irene but is not alive. It is a child, but it is placed in a museum, a cemetery. Irene is a grown up person but behaves like a child. She wants Rubek to be a man, not only an artist, but she would have killed him if he dared to touch her. Rubek loves and idealizes her, but would become impure if he touched her. She is worthy of worship, but she is like a child.

A make-believe attitude characteristic for the play of children is persistent in the play. In the famous scene by the brook, Irene evokes the game she and Rubek played in their happy days on Lake Taunitz, a game of make-believe swans and boats, with allusions to the myth of Lohengrin from the Parsifal legends. Irene represents the swan that was leading Lohengrin in the Parsifal legend, and in a similar act she led Rubek, (who is compatible with Lohengrin) to success. Like Lohengrin, Rubek is temporarily married to Maja and in one version of the legend, the Swan returns Lohengrin to the Grail Castle, just like Irene is supposed to bring back Rubek to the romantic aesthetic ideal and his creativity. Barranger interprets this allusion to Lohengrin as an ironic counterpart to the scene acted out by the stream. In his view, Lohengrin and Rubek are opposites, because Rubek “has spiritually mutilated others, his selfhood and his art”. (Barranger 1975)

Myths in art can be used both for the purpose of introducing symbolic and allegorical references that intertextually open up the works, as well as for the introduction of uncanniness, uncertainty and awe, “a mysterious or mystical quality or mood” to them. (Castellani 1998 : 258) The introduction of the myth of Lohengrin gives a mystical and mysterious quality to Irene and Rubek's relationship, something they anxiously need in order to keep playing their desperate game until the end. They use the myth in a simple game of imitation which is in fact a sublimated meta-artistic

performance of a mythical situation, an allegory of their relation and their self-idealization. The retelling of the myth evokes and brings back liminal time, a frozen continuum that has the quality of the first creation, of dream-worlds and childhood innocence. Just as children imitate elders, thus learning how to behave, Rubek and Irene imitate the search for the Grail, and the roles they represent for each other in the search for the creative ideal. The last time they play the game of swans and lilies, the last time they tell the story of their own idealized self is just before they die. (Ibsen: 1089 -1092)

The setting of the scenes of the play also possess a liminal quality – the first act is at a hotel next to the fjord, just before the couple Maja and Rubek start their travel to the mountains. The second act is at a health resort in the mountains, and the third act is at a mountainside higher in the mountain. The space of the play is a metaphor of vertical climbing and fall, of challenge and growth. However, just as they are unable to accept the new facts they have come to learn about themselves and continue their lives within society, Rubek and Irene are unable to climb up the mountain successfully and come back to a peaceful and loving existence in the low everyday – they die in an avalanche, in an impressive, cruel and clean death – a double suicide of two already dead people. The brook by which they act out the famous game of lilies and swans is also placed in a liminal-like setting, since running water has such a quality by itself, and since the whole scene is like an idealized melodramatic scenario, with greenery and playful children in the background. In this scene, Irene is like a pure virginal creature that the children approach without fear, as if her child-like nature is appealing and close to them.

By analyzing the mimetic and diegetic spaces in four Ibsen's plays, among which *When We Dead Awaken* as well, Jørgen Dines Johansen comes to the conclusion that they all embody an element of a peak or a tower, that has the semantic meaning of an archaic climbing up, of reaching the realms of divinity. They also have an element of the underworld, and they contain a repeated ascent, or an attempt for a repeated ascent from the underworld to the peaks, in order to “overcome an absence of joy and a presence of resentment and disgust, of mental sterility and lack of meaning, of anxiety and fear in which the protagonists are caught.” (Johansen 2002 : 146) This position in which the characters are caught represents the mimetic space, in front of the audience. This space is their diegetic centre, their mythical axis mundi. Their travelling upwards is a result of an alienation from this centre, and Johansen

observes how the ascent can both be understood as a need to overcome obstacles, do something significant and important, as well as a brutal social climbing that always leaves a victim behind. (Johansen 2002 : 145) He reads Irene as the victim of the first climbing. The second climbing, or an attempt for a second climbing, always results with a death or a fall of the one that was the first, successful climber, it ends in a kind of retribution. It is a mythical fall caused by a closeness of a woman, by a false dream of omnipotence. In the way Ibsen used this mythical pattern, Johansen sees his modernism: by placing realist characters in mythical contexts, Ibsen is very close to the works of Joyce or Eliot. (Johansen 2002 : 148)

Rene Girard (1999) investigated desires as not simple and object-oriented, but as a result of an experience learnt from a ‘mediator of desire’, that ‘teaches’ what the ideal should be. He offered a psychoanalytical model of triangular desire, i.e. of desires that are not dictated by our basic drives, but given by a model – ideal. Through his famous analyses of *Don Quixote* Girard shows how the models of triangular desire work in this world-known parody of melodramatic illusion. *Don Quixote* is a novel that marks a turn point in literary history – although Cervantes used the formal conventions of the picaresco style and the chivalric romanticised literature, the novel actually represents an ironic critique of these middle age idealized genres and the pathos of artificial theatrical behaviour. This novel is a critique of idealized world views and people that get easily drawn, identified and driven by ideals. It is a critique of idealized romance – a concept that the romantics of the early 19th century re-evoked and used for their own purpose. However, this novel is also a wide opening towards reality, by advocating a realist and reality based view of the world. This novel that was written at the beginning of 17th century, in the early modern times, is one of the landmarks of the new spirit of humanity that our world as it is today is a product of. And it is, just like *When We Dead Awaken*, an attempt to brake with an old aesthetic convention and to accept the new.

Girard noticed that the first education of children is consisted of ‘mimetic performing’ of adults – of imitating and repeating their behaviour. It is usually normal and positive to adopt and perform commonly accepted and standardized role-models that fit the rules of society. The structures and institutions of all the different societies in the world are grounded in learning how to perform right and how to follow the ‘rules of the game’ successfully. The 19th century society created an ideal of the free bourgeois’ individuality as well as an image of the family and the home that became a

common ideal of the western world. The world as it is today is a result of the spread of this idealized image of the free individual. The idea of life as theatre (i.e. mimesis) is so old because it is one of the basic principles for preserving society and culture.

I think that Ibsen also penetrated through the mechanism of performing mimetic desires as if they are inherent. In his works he presents us with the truth about the performative nature of fulfilling desire. The condition of men is always to desire something, and, as Girard points, as soon, or even before, a man fulfils his basic needs and desires, there comes an immediate desire for something else after the completion. These desires are intense, as they come from a need to fulfil a lack of *being*. This lack of being is externally observed as something that a person misses, but is possessed by someone else. In other words, we always refer to an Other in order to be informed what is it that we lack, and all our desires can be traced back to a need to imitate someone else's possession, quality or knowledge. "It is not through words, therefore, but by the example of his own desire that the model conveys to the subject the supreme desirability of the object." (Girard 1977: 146)

The conclusion is that all desire is mimetic – it depends on what we perceive around us and adopt as our own model. Need for originality in adults is nothing else but a need to be imitated, to be perceived as an individual, and although opposite to the imitative nature of our behaviour, need for originality is in fact a covering mechanism for the real mimetic nature of our own desires. Girard lucidly remarks that although sameness, likeness and similarity are usually connected to an image of harmonious and easy going relationships, having the same desire as someone else actually leads to a disappointment of the model in his own originality. Someone is imitating him, i.e., pursuing his desire, while the imitator feels

both rejected and humiliated, judged unworthy by his model of participating in the superior existence the model himself enjoys. ... The model considers himself too far above the disciple, the disciple considers himself too far bellow the model... To make the reciprocity complete, we need only add that the disciple can also serve as a model, even to his own model. As for the model, no matter how self-sufficient he may appear, he invariably assumes the role of disciple, either in this context or another. From all indications, only the role of disciple is truly essential – it is the role that must be invoked to define the basic human condition. (Girard 1977: 146-147)

If the model of imitation is replaced by an artistic ideal, or an ideal imposed by society, than the model of triangular desire by Girard uncovers the basic problem of idealism exposed in *When We Dead Awaken* – the disciples (i.e., the artists) are the ones that pertain the ideal and 'keep it alive,' while at the same time, they are doomed

to suffering because of never being able to reach the ideal. If the disciple has no other person to reflect upon as a model, he has to project an image within himself and reflect on it. Thus, one is left with imitating an idealized image of the self, never being able to reach to his own standards. This critical situation can lead to despair and isolation – and Arnold Rubek perfectly exemplifies this self-reflective paradox.

Girard also notices that the wish to be imitated is always followed by a wish not to be imitated, i.e., a wish that others do not desire the same object, because that would imply the possibility of losing it. Thus, every desire is followed by the threat of someone else adopting it as their model, and “neither model nor disciple really understands why one constantly thwarts the other because neither perceives that his desire has become the reflection of the other’s.” (Girard 1977: 147) The effects of this *double bind* can be devastating, especially since it is a general rule, a pattern of how uncontrolled mimetic desire ends. This mechanism implies that the closer the disciple is to achieving the fulfilment of his desire, the bigger the resistance from the model will be, and this leads to conflict, even display of aggression. In fact, this mechanism implies that desire is always connected to violence, because it is what we experience when we want to fulfil it.

Violent opposition, then, is the signifier of ultimate desire, of divine self-sufficiency, of that “beautiful totality” whose beauty depends on its being inaccessible and impenetrable. The victim of this violence both adores and detests it. ...Mimetic desire is a term more comprehensible than violence for religious pollution. (Girard 1977: 148)

At the time when she was Rubek’s model, Irene was in fact pursuing a desire mediated by the artist to her. Instead of simply sexually desiring him and a child with him, she desired his art and the artistic ideal of the sculpture as their ideal child.

IRENE. (*coldly, as before*). I want to tell you something, Arnold.

RUBEK. Well?

IRENE. I never loved your art before I met you. Nor afterward, either.

RUBEK. But the artist, Irene?

IRENE. I detest the artist.

RUBEK. The artist in me, too?

IRENE. Most of all, in you. Whenever I undressed myself and stood naked for you, I hated you, Arnold –

RUBEK. (*intensely*) Irene, you didn’t! That isn’t true!

IRENE. I hated you because you could stand there so unmoved –

RUBEK. (*laughs*) Unmoved? You believe that?

IRENE. So infuriatingly self-controlled, then. And because you were an artist, only an artist. Not a man! (Her tone changes, becoming warm and intimate.) But that statue in wet, living clay, *that* I loved – the way a human figure filled with soul emerged out of those raw, shapeless masses. That was *our* creation, *our* child. Mine and yours.”

RUBEK. (*sadly*). Yes, in spirit and in truth. (Ibsen 1978:1070)

Irene both detests and loves the sculpture – it is Rubek's art, and as such she detests it, and it is their child, and as such she adores it. Blinded by her need to only see the ideal of creation in that sculpture she is unaware that in fact, she had adopted Rubek's desire as her own and reformulated it in the attempt to separate it from his. Rubek himself desires to be the true, idealized artist, and there is no hint of a particular person that had mediated this desire to him, i.e. no specific reason why he so stubbornly pursues the romantic ideal of beauty and artistic creation. Perhaps this is one of the most important questions that the play imposes on us: namely, who (what) mediates the desire for the ideal to the artist, i.e. how (why) does a person get interested and involved in this kind of pursue? Does it get mediated by aesthetic and cultural conventions, or is there an essence to the idea of the creative genius?

Rubek's desire for the ideal changes the way he perceives the world in a way that forces him, similarly to Don Quixote, to look at the world distorted through his desire. However, instead of the parodied, romantically idealized scope of Don Quixote, Arnold Rubek possesses a sad, fragmented, cynical and desperate scope. In the opening dialogue between Rubek and Maja Ibsen straightforwardly reveals the big issues of this play: the muted, isolated way of living that haunts the artist, the problematic relationship to his wife and to his masterpiece, his creative and expressive dryness and his need to always travel somewhere, his idealism and his problematic nature when it comes to having contact with Others.

RUBEK. (*curtly and silently*). I've seen more than enough.

MAJA. You think a sea voyage will be better for you?

RUBEK. It's always a change.

MAJA. All right, whatever's the best for you –

RUBEK. For me? Best? There's nothing at all wrong with me.

MAJA. (*gets up and goes to him*). Yes, there is, Rubek. You must sense that yourself.

RUBEK. But, Maja dearest – what do you mean, specifically?

MAJA. (*behind him, bending over the back of his chair*). You tell me. You've begun moving restlessly from place to place. You can't seem to settle anywhere, neither at home nor abroad. And lately you've become so withdrawn, you don't want to see people at all.

RUBEK. (*with irony*). No, really – have you noticed *that*?

MAJA. Anyone who knows you could hardly miss it. And then I think it's so distressing that you've lost the urge to work.

RUBEK. *That*, too?

...

MAJA. But ever since you finished your masterpiece –

...

RUBEK. When I'd created this masterpiece of mine – (*With an impassioned sweep of his hand*.) – Because "Resurrection Day" is a masterpiece! Or was, at the start. No, it still is. It must – must be – *must* be a masterpiece!

MAJA (*staring at him, astonished*). Of course, Rubek – the whole world knows it.

RUBEK. (*abruptly, with a deprecating gesture.*) The world knows nothing! Understands nothing!

MAJA. It has some degree of awareness, though –

RUBEK. Yes, of things that aren't even there. Things I never had in mind. Oh, but that's what they go into raptures over! (*Muttering to himself.*) It is not worth to kill it yourself, slaving away the mob – the masses – the "whole world." (Ibsen: 1036)

The dialogue above expresses the paradoxical situation in which Rubek had found himself after modelling his only masterpiece. As can be found out later in the play, Rubek had re-modelled his ideal masterpiece – the image of resurrection – from Irene's single body into a complex composition that includes the world and reflects his own acknowledgment of remorse for all he had missed and lapsed. Irene is still sculpted in the composition, but the central spot is taken by a man that seems to be in deep remorse and regret, trying to clean away his fingers so that he could join the coming of the new world, but "harrowed by the thought that he'll never, never succeed. ...He'll sit there perpetually in his own hell." (Ibsen: 1073)

The story of the creation of the masterpiece tells the story of Rubek's pursuit of an ideal. He had first set as a goal for himself to sculpt the idealized image of Resurrection as the idealized shape of Irene. However, the closer he was to achieving his aesthetic ideal, the further away he was from Irene as a person. In the double bind of triangular desire, Irene began to wish for the same ideal as Rubek, modelling herself to fit the image. She had not only lost her soul in this way, but she also threatened Rubek with her self-idealization, so that he had to devalue her and crash her idealization by both insulting her as a minor character that played a part in an episode of his life, as well as by lowering her position in the sculpture, and placing himself at the front as the largest figure in the composition.

When he met Irene Rubek new perfectly well what he could use her for. By desiring her shape and her body as a model, and by idealizing her as a form, he had fallen into a model of triangular desire in which he desired Irene through the scope of his aesthetic idealism. It was Irene's body that was to represent the idealized image of the sculpture, but along the way she had also started to desire the sculpture as an aesthetic ideal, as their idealized child. Irene shows as much aesthetic idealism as Rubek in her persistency to be around him and let him shape a sculpture after her, but with this she was denying her drive for a natural love relationship. This is why she blames him for taking away her soul, for objectifying her into art.

At the time when they served as models for each other, both Rubek and Irene believed that their physical contact will pollute their ideal. After Irene had left him Rubek remodelled the sculpture into a self-reflexive image of remorse and fear of never resurrecting, of never reaching the ideal. Because of her leaving him and therefore ruining the ideal of her devotion to him, he dethroned her into a minor part of the composition. He moved the idealization of her being to an image of his own self, haunted by fear of failing the ideal. As he says to Maja, he had thought of killing the sculpture himself, thus expressing aggression to the dead-end situation he is in. The second version of the sculpture is a representation of his own self, and that is why he despises the interpretations of other people, while is in fact angry and revenging on himself because of his double loss: both of his aesthetic ideal, as well as the woman that was the embodiment of it.

On the other hand, Irene also expresses violence against the sculpture – she had thought of killing it just before she left Rubek, thus expressing violence both to him for not letting her live up to his ideal, as well as to her self for becoming an object and a soulless person.

IRENE (sits musing for a moment). If I'd exercised my rights then, Arnold –

RUBEK. What then?

IRENE. I would have killed that child.

RUBEK. Killed it?

IRENE. (in a whisper). Killed it – before I left you. Smashed it to bits.

...

IRENE. Afterward, I killed it innumerable times. In daylight and darkness. Killed it in hate – and revenge – and agony.

...

IRENE. You are the blame I had to die... (Ibsen: 1050-1051)

The idea of killing the sculpture falls on both of the minds of Irene and Rubek. They had both lost their belief in the ideal they had mutually projected on one another and they had both served as a mediator and as a disciple in the mimetic complex of triangular desire. They believe that they had both taken away something of each other when they parted – Rubek had taken Irene's soul, while she had taken the key to his creative kasket. Irene feels that she is dead and that Rubek killed her, while he feels empty and unfulfilled because of losing his aesthetic idealism. She shows aggression and readiness to hurt anyone that dares touch her, and carries a sharp little knife with her as protection. At the same time, she blames Rubek for not wanting her sexually. She was possessed by an ideal of her body mediated by Rubek and she continued with

her idealization after she had left him. She had killed both of her husbands, one of them with “a fine, sharp dagger” she always carried in her bed, (Ibsen :1049) and threatens to kill Rubek as well. She also “always had a sharp needle” hidden in her hair when the sculpture was being made, meant for Rubek in case he dared to touch her. (Ibsen : 1051)

IRENE. (*silently, with lightning speed, half draws a thin, sharp knife from her bosom, then whispers hoarsely*). Arnold, have you done some harm to our child? (Ibsen : 1071)

...

IRENE. And in that composition you’ve moved me back, a bit faded – a subordinate figure – in a group. (*She draws the knife.*)

RUBEK. Hardly subordinate. At the least, let’s call it an intermediate figure – roughly speaking.

IRENE. Now you’ve pronounced your own judgement. (*About to stab him.*)

RUBEK. (*turns and looks up at her*). Judgement?

IRENE. (*quickly hides the knife and speaks as if choked with misery.*) My whole soul – you and I – we, we, we and our child were in that figure alone. (Ibsen : 1073)

Every time she encounters the threat of someone touching her physically, Irene draws the knife. She also threatens and plans to kill the Nun, her companion, but she never really does it. However, just as she doesn’t stab the Nun, she doesn’t stab Rubek as well, and at the end of play confesses to him the ‘acting out’ of doing so. In the play Irene does not really use her knife – the knife is a tool with which she shows her violent feelings towards anyone that threatens her self-idealization, (both of her body and as a sculpture) but she keeps the knife away and ‘acts out’ when she is about to be uncovered. Whenever Rubek looks at her, she acts out to be weak, hurt, and vulnerable, and performs the exact type of woman that Rubek needs to see in her. He is “her beloved lord and master” that should take her to the peaks of promise, while at the same time he is despised and hated. Irene shows a need to control as much as Rubek and Ulfheim do regarding her material – she controls her behaviour and her impulses and performs an idealised Lady just as much as she controls Rubek by mediating desires on him.

In the famous game scene of Irene and Rubek by the river, Irene uses the myth of Lohengrin in order to awaken the desire for the artistic ideal in Rubek. She chooses to use, i.e., re-stage, perform anew the old game of their happy times when she feels that Rubek will fail to perceive her mediating the desire for “light and its flaming glory” to him. “Up to the peaks of promise!” – she says, (Ibsen : 1091) and Rubek accepts this, adding fire to her with another desire that he knows is ‘a common women’ ideal: “Up there we’ll celebrate our marriage feast, Irene –my beloved!”.

(Ibsen :1091). Rubek and Irene both imitate and play the game that they know is most appealing for the other – in order to overcome the fear of what frightens both of them – real life that eventually leads to death. In this way, they thrill and challenge each other to the point when the game gets so overwhelming that they substitute real life with it. In a dangerous game of make-belief, at the end they fearlessly face death, and not only that, but they mediate through each other the desire to see the light and the sunrise – a sort of an eschatological ideal in it.

In their last dialogue Rubek and Irene frantically uncover the love-hate nature of their relationship and their innermost fears, performing their death in an agreement, as a work of art. In this last scene Irene uncovers her deepest secret – her fear of men and her idealisation of her body that was polluted by all the gazes and desires, her attempts to kill Rubek and her anger because of the minor role as an episode in his life, the fear from the straitjacket and the Nun. (Ibsen : 1089 - 1090) Rubek, on his behalf, admits to her that for him she is only “the woman [he] dreams of seeing in [her]” (Ibsen : 1090) and that he is the one that drove her onto a turntable, putting “the dead clay model above the joys of life – and love.” (Ibsen : 1091)

IRENE. (*regarding him sadly*). The desire to live has died in me, Arnold. Now I'm risen. And I search for you – and find you. And then I see both you and life lie dead – just as I was lying.

RUBEK. Oh, how totally mistaken you are! Life goes on breeding and spawning in us and around us, as it has forever.

IRENE. (*smiles and shakes her head*). Your young woman risen from death can see the whole of life laid out and embalmed.

RUBEK. (*throwing his arms around her ardently*). Then let our two dead souls live life to the full once – before we go down in our graves again! (Ibsen : 1091)

The relationship of Irene and Rubek is a repetitive mimetic performance of what they assume fits best the idealization of the other, so that both of them can re-confirm their ambiguous and ambivalent positions to their own selves, to each other and to the world. They are highly melodramatic and theatrical while performing their relationship because it is unnatural and based on idealization. Ibsen's implicit critique of this idealization and their theatricality is a positive turn towards the contemporary and reality based social performatives of 19th century women and of the artists as a part of the new modern society.

Roger Caillois (1961) divides games in four general categories: games of agon (competition), games of alea (luck, chance), games of mimicry (imitation), and games ofilinx (vertigo). The games of agon are games that can range from races with no

rules, boxing, hunting, up to sophisticated planning such as in chess or billiard. The games of agon are actually consisted of all the various kinds of competition. These are the games most appealing to Ulfheim, the fearless hunter that competes with nature, thus overcoming his fear of death. In a way, he also competes with Rubek in the attempt to take his young wife Maja and take her up high into the mountains. All the four characters in the play are thrilled and excited by the thought of going high in the mountains, thus anticipating the overwhelming games of ilinx (all the games that provoke vertigo – from childish round-about, through dancing the waltz, climbing rocks and walking on rope). Ulfheim and Maja, however, decide to stop playing this game of vertigo and the game of the hunter and the hunted, and, when they see that it is too dangerous to take the chance of climbing up the mountain, they go down to where real life is. The pair Maja – Ulfheim does not proceed with the playing of games, and they don't play the final game of alea (luck, chance), to see if they will survive the coming storm. The singing of Maja can be interpreted through the aspect of game as well – she sings because she is free from playing the continuous, boring and lifeless game of mimicry of a bride to the artist. Maja and Ulfheim seem to know that they are playing – unlike Rubek and Irene, they don't fall into the trap of mediated, triangular desire. They play, exchange roles of the hunter and the hunted, they play the game of going up, but they see the real dangers in the play and stop when it seems to threaten their lives. They know that they are playing and they know when they are playing.

Rubek and Irene, on the other hand, because of the desire for the blinding ideal of art that they both mediate to each other, loose this ability (or perhaps deliberately act out that they don't see the danger) and loose their lives in the ecstasy of the ilinx. The game of mimicry is Rubek's favourite game – he plays it with Irene, and also with Maja. The games of mimicry embody all types of imitation, playing with dolls, masques and masquerades, up to the theatre and all the various types of staged art. The game of the flowers, leaves and swans acted out by Rubek and Irene is a game of mimicry par excellence. Rubek and Irene are aware that they are playing regarding this game, but they both use it as a tool for mediating a desire that after that looses the aspect of game and substitutes reality. Interestingly, the games Rubek plays with Maja are full of awareness about the game, and this is expressed by the ironic, cynical and bitter dialogues that they have. It is as if Rubek is mocking with Maja because she doesn't have the enchanting ability to mediate a desire on him, and she is mocking

with him because she sees his deluded nature and his disability to just play or just live.

The aspect of game and play is a very important aspect of art, the artist, as well as life, an aspect that has been noticed by the first theorists of the aesthetic and has been a prevailing topic in art ever since. Games are, in fact, very serious. They are necessary for the growth and the shaping of the individual, as well as the artist. I believe that the works of Ibsen mirror this very important aspect of existence as well, suggesting and asking important questions about the nature of game and its functions in society and culture. Game brings joyfulness, playfulness, satisfaction and outlet for anger. It is perhaps the least harmful way for shaping the ego, and for finding out the real drives behind the persona. Games bring integration. In my opinion, *When We Dead Awaken* is also a play about the artist and his model that mix play with real life. This led them to a disability to live (without mimetic playing, without imitating each other's ideal) and to their final game of death. Death probably allowed them the last thrill they could have possibly felt.

Through implementing the aspects of game, the performative aspects of life adopt another dimension. The enhanced performativity and obvious theatricality of Irene and Rubek, Ibsen's use of melodramatic conventions and his (repeated) use of the vertical scheme motive that ends with death have been long interpreted as a sign for the bad faith and the pessimism and cynicism of the modern individual. However, by showing how society increased the need for performance of the individual in the modern times, and by pointing to aspects in Ibsen's works, especially in *When We Dead Awaken* that show signs of awareness for the performances and performatives of life on all levels, I hope to have uncovered that these aspects are actually an inevitable characteristic of the modern society, and that what Ibsen was doing was only pointing to them as inevitable. The modern society had no need for the idealised artist, and the modern understanding of life, love and family rejects couples as Rubek and Irene as theatrical. Their exaggerated performance is a result of the desperate need to preserve a performative role that is out of fashion, no longer modern.

What I believe Ibsen also points to is that too serious entanglement with ideals leads to creating one's self into a similar image of these two characters. The answer lies in the adaptive and playful performance – when not idealized, roles can be changed with ease. An idealised role means a determined role. And determined roles mean not being free; they don't offer the possibility of changing one's self image,

one's identity. Modernity requires letting go of idealised roles. It also requires letting go of the idealized family, of the idealized art, of the idealized nature. Of course, modernity had (and still has!) its own set of roles to be performed, but the way they are to be performed in order not to be destructive for the self-image, for identity and for the private is with awareness. An idealized role does not allow awareness of it as a role, simply because then it would not be absolute, it would not be ideal. When a person with an idealized self-image discovers that this image is not an actual ideal, but only a role, or when the ideal is lost for another reason, what follows is a psychic process of grief and mourning, a state of melancholia.

Social life is a set of performances. As I hope to have shown throughout this thesis, I believe that Ibsen was aware of this simple notion, due to his own modernity and fame that demanded from him public performances, due to his life-span that fits an obvious and radical change of ideals and ideologies and due to what I read from his plays. In Ibsen's prose plays I read an awareness of the different positions and roles in the modern society that had to be performed correctly and effectively, and I read a big question arriving out of this awareness. If we are a set of roles and our lives are nothing but constant performance, what is the human essence? How does one become human? How does one remain unaffected by the performative reality of society, religion, art, ideology, the family? Is there anything left of the human besides these performances? Where do the performative layers stop?

Ibsen himself tried to avoid artificiality and public performances, but he was also a creator of myths and performing himself. I cannot be sure if his message coincides with my reading, but what I read from his last play as an answer to the modern human condition is Perform – but play! With the awareness of performances and performatives in life comes a big freedom – the freedom to approach identity playfully. To realize that it is changeable, shifting, that it is a convention necessary for survival in society. A person that travels a lot comes can come to this conclusion more easily, because it is easier to recognize roles as roles when they are unfamiliar, when one is not used to them and when one observes others performing. This is one of the meanings of the veil of maya in the Hindu tradition – the illusion of reality as fixed, as determined, as something we know as a fact. And in the character Maja of *When We Dead Awaken* I see the embodiment of this idea – in her self-freedom to choose the way she would go, who she would follow and what she will play out for him.

Of course, in the last instance, Maja is not really free – she has to fit society in one way or the other. Just as well as Nora Helmer is not free when she goes out of the doll house, just as well as Ellida Wangel is not free when she decides to become a mother and a wife. But the freedom of these (amazingly all female) characters lies in their breaking out of the illusion that there are such things as determined natural roles and determined natural ideals, in their realizing that there is something to be learned, something to be found out and adapted to, something to adopt and use for their own selves. When the public and private roles and ideals do not fit the modern person, instead of blaming the bad condition of the modern times, some of Ibsen's plays offer the freedom to change the attitude towards one's self. This is where self-reflection enters as a positive characteristic, as an awareness of one's own position, as a possibility to change. The self – idealized characters in Ibsen's plays die tragically. Those who don't are the ones I find more interesting.

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